



LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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Two Men o' Mendip.

BY WALTER RAYMOND,

AUTHOR OF 'GENTLEMAN UPCOTT'S DAUGHTER,' 'LOVE AND QUIET LIFE,' 'TRYPHENA IN LOVE,' &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAST SHEAF A-TIED.

WE have a-done. We have a-done.
An' all a-done. An' all a-done.
Hurrah ! Hurrah !

The shouts of the distant reapers came in through the open window of Charterhouse kitchen, where Sophia Pierce was at work. A pewter platter in one hand, a dumpling-spoon of brass in the other, she was bent two-double over the hearth. Upon the fire was a crock—one of those round, pot-bellied cooking vessels with three little legs, and three little rings and a bow-handle to hang on the chimney-crook. Sophia dipped out her dumplings without haste ; then she got up, straightened her back, and stood to listen.

We have a-done. An' all a-done.
The last sheaf a-tied.

'How they do whoopey, sure 'nough,' she snorted, out of all patience with herself and everybody else. 'Could hear 'em a'most ten mile.'

The last load in Ubley had been carried the day before yesterday, and the place was off her hands at last. She had got out of it 'wonderful well.' John Winterhead and everybody agreed that

her talent for business was beyond belief. Standerwick had taken the house, and might go in to-day or to-morrow if he wished. There was a piece of luck! Without a word he paid what she asked—an uncomfortable thing to happen in business, after all, and apt to leave the seller a prey to doubt. Perhaps she ought to have put the price higher, though the 'rattle-traps' could never have fetched half the money in open sale. Never. Yet Sophia was unhappy, and at odds with all the world.

The time had come when she must look things in the face and make up her mind what to do. During her stay at Charterhouse she had grown leaner and leaner, not only with work, though of that she had done enough in the last three months, but from a fever of longing, and hope, and continual disappointment. It began long ago, when John Winterhead laughed and praised her to her face in her father's house. A secret thought, hidden in her heart, like a seed underground, silently it grew and grew. In her trouble, when he did more than if she had been of his kin, the belief that he meant marriage dazzled her. His care to squeeze the last penny-piece out of Ubley, the time he spent and pains he took fostered the expectation. To one bred as she, to hold getting for the highest good, unmixed kindness of heart had no place in life. There must be something else. In everything a deeper motive unseen. She watched for his coming day by day, and waited for the word he did not speak. It was all because of Patty, she thought. She hated the silly little fool, with no more sense in her head than a wash-dish.

Suddenly John Winterhead changed.

Sophia Pierce was no longer a chicken, and she could see it all. Patty, taking alarm, must have sent for Aunt Maria unbeknown, and that unlooked-for arrival was nothing but a blind. Since then he had never helped her in word or deed. Why, if she did but ask for counsel, he turned the question off with some short answer nothing worth. As for letting a dislike for Standerwick stand in the way of business—any such excuse she laughed to scorn. That was all 'my eye an' Betty Martin.' Only his promise about Patty held John Winterhead from doing what he would.

The reapers kept on shouting—sometimes they shouted for an hour.

She was to send a 'nunchin' out into the field. All the neighbours were there, for in those days folk turned in to help one another, and sheared and harvested, they and their sons, from one farm to the next. To-year, the season was so wonderful fine and dry, that every mote so far had been carried without so much

as a drop o' rain. To-day they looked to cut in the morning, and haul it home to mow, every bit an' crumb, before night.

Sophia stood by the window in doubt. Since John Winterhead took less notice of her, she could scarcely bear to be out of his sight. Her passion for the man, deeply inwrought upon the grain of self-interest, which went to the very core of a *Pierce*, gave her no rest. Her eyes followed him when he was about the house. Her thoughts went after him afield. She would make herself so necessary in Charterhouse that he could never let her go. Then she laughed at herself for a fool to be so hungry for this man's praise.

She turned away briskly, strode into the backlet, and called—
'Patty! Patty Winterhead!'

Then out so far as the pump and called again.

The shrill voice of the maid replied from the dairy-house.
'Miss Patty went away by now, athirt the hill,' it said.

A smile flickered around Sophia's thin lips, and a gleam of satisfaction glanced from her eyes. In a moment they were gone.

'Very well. Then keep on wi' your work,' she cried, just as if she were mistress in the place. 'I'll put the victuals together, an' carr' it out in groun' myzelf.'

She took the cross-handled basket hanging by a hook from the back-kitchen beam and went into the larder. She packed white bread and cheese, a spare-rib of small pork handy to cut between the bones, and the dumplings. Sophia would have begrudged to give so much of her own. But she knew John Winterhead must be glad in heart—to haul his wheat and never stand the sheaves in stitch. Then she set out with the basket on her arm.

The harvest field lay over against the cliffs, but between them was a valley and a long wood. Sophia tramped along, eager to be there before the fun was over and the men at work again. The peasant in her understood so well, and did not want to hinder time.

Louder and louder grew the shouts and laughter as she drew near. Across a broad close of grass were wheel-ruts, and all along on both sides straggling motes of bearded wheat. There was a gate 'a-post ope,' and above it every sprawling briar was thickly hung with straw, where the load in passing had scraped the hedge. Sophia walked through on to the crisp yellow stubble.

The reapers, each one with his reap-hook overhead as high as his bare arm could reach, were drawn around in a ring. In the middle stood the last sheaf as big as three, and tied about with three binds; and close to it long Jims, holding up a knitch of ruddy corn—a double handful tightly bound just below the ears,

with the straw plaited together smooth and round into the shape of a bee-butt.

Then they hallooed again and again,

We have a-done. An' all a-done.
A neck—a neck—a neck,

and danced and whooped 'Hurrah! Hurrah!' until they were hoarse.

From that they 'fell a-rompsing, and to pretty highdigees, sure enough.'

One o' Blagdon was lying fast asleep under the hedgerow, with his back against an elm tree. Solomon Moggridge, crafty man, crept up to him on tip-toe.

'Goo on, constable,' cried Jims. 'Why, a'ter all this noise, if a elephant was to step 'pon the man's stumick, 't'ud never wake un in theas world.'

'No more 't'oodn'.'

'No more 't'ood.'

'I never don't believe 't'oodn'!'

Greatly encouraged by this consensus of opinion, Solomon tied up the legs of one o' Blagdon just below the knee-breeches and above the thick of his calves.

One o' Blagdon slept like a top.

'Let's fakket un up wi' sheaves, an' put a vower-quart virkin under the head o' un.'

The suggestion gave the greatest delight. They gently laid the sheaves around, close together like staves in a cask, and bound him up with a waggon line. They pillow'd him upon one of the little barrels in which cider is carried into the fields. As Jims said, 'twas 'nothing but the act of a friend, an' all so good as a weath'r bed an' a bolster.'

One o' Blagdon went on sleeping sound.

But now an argument arose.

Solomon, always thoughtful if a little slow, supposed that the man must ha' had a drop too much.

And yet how could that be? Look at it how you would, his virkin couldn' a-bin villed above dree times.

'Not a drop too much—not a drop!' shouted John Winter-head hotly, in his character of hospitable host.

'Ha, tidden the cider,' said long Jims Matravis, with the grave shake of the head which comes of conviction. 'Cider's a thing no man can ha' too much o'. Tidden the cider.'

'He can have too much to once,' replied Solomon briskly. 'What is it then?'

'Tis the zitten down, you vool. He'd a-bin all right if he hadn' a-zot down.'

Then they all laughed, for Solomon looked sheepish and a little bit upset. And after all, think of it how you would, it must have been the sitting down.

'Look here, constable,' cried Jims, stretching out his long brown arm, 'it can't be cider. Why, I can get drunk 'pon cider dree times avore noon, an' do a day's work a'ter that.'

'An' so you can, Jims—so you can,' agreed the constable thoughtfully, 'for I've a-zeed ee hundreds o' time.'

'But mind me,' Jims went on, gratified, but not wishing to boast, 'if I do get drunk once 'pon beer, I be so wooden-headed as a gate-post.'

'An' so you be, Jims—so you be,' said Solomon, all for kindness and peace.

'Enough said. Come along, Sophia. Zit down on the bank, all o' ee. What have ee got in your basket then?' shouted John Winterhead. 'Here, bring it into the shade. That's good. Come, Solomon; now then, Jims, set to work, my lads.'

Suddenly he looked Sophia full in the face.

'Where's Patty then?' he asked.

'I—I don't know,' she stammered, taken aback by the abruptness of this question; but Sophia always fluttered when he spoke to her now.

He saw her out of countenance and cast down. She and Patty must have had some words, he thought. Patty had been so quiet of late and out of heart, moving silently about the house as if she had lost her tongue, that a fear often worried him lest Sophia, with her masterful ways, might be pushing the little mouse out of her place. He frowned at the thought. However, he said no more, but turned his back and went on to the harvesters.

'Look alive, my lads, an' be sprack. The nights do close in now, an' the days be none too long. Come, help yourselves; come, Solomon; if you don't, 'tis your own fau'ts.'

Then they sat in the cool shadow under the elm, and cut their pork with clasp-knives, and passed around the cup with laughter and jokes, until everyone had got his fill and was ready again for work.

Sophia was packing the things back in the basket, and because he stood watching her hand shook.

‘Where *is* Patty then?’ he asked sternly.

‘How should I know? She never told me. She went out.’

The handle of the basket was across her arm and she was ready to start.

‘Put it down under hedge,’ he said impatiently; ‘they’ll want another bit bime-bye.’

She did as she was bid and started to go home. Not to be put off, he walked along by her side.

‘You do know well enough,’ he insisted. ‘Where is the maid, I say?’

His harshness cut her to the quick, and deeper still because of old he had been so kind. Within her heart arose the wild fury of a woman cast aside. In her anger she was capable of anything. He would never look at her whilst he held his Patty so dear. Patty, indeed! If he only knew!

‘An’ if I were to tell,’ she cried, with the spitefulness of a spitfire, ‘I should only breed mischie’, an’ like enough get myself misliked the more.’

‘What do ee mean? If Patty have a-hurt ee, do take an’ speak out—if you can. I do hate sich undercreeping ways.’

He was in shirt-sleeves, and his red waistcoat, unbuttoned, hung apart. He had no time to waste to-day. He stopped with the air of a man determined to fool no longer.

She stepped towards him and craned forward her thin neck. Her grey eyes had never looked so shrewd and eager. She spoke in a low voice, as if she feared the nuts hanging in green clusters upon the hedge might overhear.

‘I’ve a-had it in mind more ‘an once to tell—for ‘tis too late when harm is a-done. Patty have a-got a sweetheart, Mr. Winterhead, as I do well know.’

‘Ho!’

The word was little more than a grunt of discontent. He was not going to speak too fast. He stooped, picked up two ears of ruddy wheat, slowly rubbed out the berries in his brown hands, and then threw them away.

‘Ho! Young Tom Duckett o’ Priddy, I s’pose. I thought once afore he had a bit of an inkling. I’ve never a-had the fellow to Charterhouse since.’

He was not looking at her now. A deep line came between Sophia Pierce’s black eyebrows as she scanned him narrowly. Then in a more wheedling tone she went on.

‘Who mid be I can’t zay. There, I do scarce know how to

tell ee, but speak I mus'. I can't hold such a thing back, an' you so kind too. But depen' 'pon it, Mr. Winterhead, 'tis nobody any good to make a maid act so sly. For hours every day—when you be away—an' night a'ter night, she do go out. She do leave her bed an' creep away—'

'It's a lie!'

He turned and roared it at her. Only to think such a thing, the woman must be mad. His little mouse, fresh and clean as a flower, with never a bad thought to stain her soul. The veins upon his temples swelled, and the hot blood glowed through his sunburnt cheek, as he cried again :

'It's a lie! There was never a maid o' the Winterheads yet 'ud do it.' He paused, and added with contempt, 'Unless she was witched.'

'But that mid be, Mr. Winterhead. I've a-followed her myself—more 'an once—ay, a good half-mile all alone in the dark. I've a-zeed 'em meet; an' then I've a-lost 'em.'

The belief in witchcraft was no unreal fancy to be lightly treated by Sophia.

'You've a-zeed it, do ee say? Zeed Patty meet the man, wi' your own eyes?'

'Ay, so close as we be to the gate.'

At finding her so sure, he wavered. He could not find a word to say.

Just as at a glance she counted the mows and valued the rick of old hay in home-field when she talked with Patty on the day that Standerwick was hanged, she was quick now to mark her opportunity.

'I wouldn' have her to know I told ee,' she went on in a rapid whisper, 'but she's out wi' un now. They do meet by the cliff's end. If you did go an' wait, an' look down 'pon the road from this zide, 'tis like enough you'd zee 'em part. Anyway, I've a-done what I can; for I do wish Patty well, as you mid think.'

With that she broke off abruptly and went on her way home. He called to her, but she neither looked nor answered, and in a few hasty steps passed out of sight into the grass-field.

The harvesters were hard at work. A waggon came creaking by with another load; but his gladness and pride in the crop were gone, and he moved away out of hearing of the merriment and jokes. In the further corner of the ground was a shard stopped with a hurdle. He clambered through out upon the open hill.

'Ay, she've a-bin another maid of late—another maid of late,' he muttered to himself. By nature he was not for prying and peeping, but in spite of his true self he slowly made his way towards the cliffs. Then came a burning eagerness to know who the man might be, and for fear he should be late he quickened his pace.

He was far beyond the bounds of his own farm. To be loitering there at noon, coatless, in the height of the work, too, was so unnatural and strange, that on the brink of the chasm he searched around for covert to screen him from view. Hard by, a slanting path led down some twenty yards to a gentle slope, covered with moss and bracken, and in places overgrown with brake. He sat down upon a stone and leaned against the hot rock. On the brambles by his feet blackberries reddened in the sun. He was quite hidden by the thicket, though he could watch the road both ways.

The time was long and he grew impatient. Not a wayfarer of any sort came up or down. Now and again he pulled a great double-cased silver watch from his fob, and cursed to see the minutes fly. What would the neighbours think, left to sweat at his work, and he away?

He clenched his fists. If Patty had picked up with young Tom Duckett, he would never hear of it, never give consent—no, not if he had to lock her up for a twelvemonth and a day.

For all that, there was something behind in Sophia. He could hear it in her voice.

'It's a lie!' he cried again; 'or something and nothing that a woman's tongue have a-made up into a tale.'

And yet Sophia had such head-piece—ay, and was too wide awake by half to see double. What good to her to say more than was true? His brain was in such a ferment with these doubts and thoughts that he talked aloud. 'If Patty have a-stole out by night I'll turn her out o' house an' home,' he hissed between his teeth.

All at once the jackdaws on the cliff before him arose with cries and circled in the air. Disturbed by the noise and movement, he looked up. Quite close as the sight glances, but on the other side of the gap, upon the cliff-side, stood Standerwick. A woman, whose face was turned away, hung clinging around his neck. John Winterhead felt his heart fail, and the blood stopped in his veins. He knew that it was Patty.

She lifted her head and spoke to Standerwick. There was no

other spot on earth from which they could be seen ; but here they were in full view, near and clear, like the back-sworders at a revel, or, better still, like play actors upon a stage.

She was crying ; John Winterhead could mark the tears upon her cheeks. Standerwick bent down, whispered in her ear, and kissed her. She smiled through her grief, and a light of love and happiness shone in her eyes.

Then they parted quietly, less like lovers than a couple some time wed who will meet again in an hour. Patty passed away behind the bushes, and Standerwick was left alone upon the ledge.

John Winterhead stood spell-bound, like one at sight of something beyond all belief. Then he threw himself upon the ground, a broken man, and writhed and sobbed. Charterhouse and the land were nothing ; Patty was worse than dead. For him, what he had seen could have but one meaning. The little mouse had been led away and ruined by the murdering son of a gallows-thief, whose life out of cowardice he had spared. He lay there on the rocks and moaned.

Then he sprang up. He felt a strength of manhood in his limbs more than he had ever known. It seemed to him that nothing on earth could stand before him. He would go across and seize the villain there upon the ledge, and wrestle with him, man to man, never losing grip until one should throw the other headlong from the cliff.

But Standerwick, little dreaming that he could be seen, drew aside the ivy and went slowly into the cave.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RECKONING.

HE was standing on the level floor in the middle of the cave. The sweat streamed down his cheeks, his heart throbbed so hard and fast that he panted and gasped for breath. He stood at his full height, but his knees shook under him as if he had been called upon for some great effort to the utmost of his strength. Yet he struck but one blow—only one blow—and Standerwick lay at his feet.

It happened so quickly, that now it seemed beyond belief.

He knew that Standerwick was dead—lying there out of all living shape, just as Joseph Pierce in the shadow of the wall that

night. The madness of his anger was gone. He felt weak, as if in a moment he must fall away, like water; and something within him said that he, John Winterhead, had done the very thing he hid.

No longer empty-handed, as when he came from the harvest-field, his fingers grasped a stout hazel cudgel, dragged from a broken hurdle in a hedgerow gap as he hurried from hill to hill. All the changes and working of his passion since he saw Patty leave the ledge were fresh and clear before his mind. His fear that Standerwick might be gone; his growing haste, as he stumbled over the rocks and broken road. To see the cunning wattled path behind the bushes, put there that the maid might come and go, roused him into a burning fury. The fellow was but vermin; he could kill him as he would a rat or a stoat.

And yet, for all the madness of his anger, within the narrow passage he had gone warily, not knowing what was before; until, himself in darkness, in the bright light of the cave he could see Standerwick kneeling on the ground, tying together the four corners of a handkerchief to make a bundle. The knot slipped. Standerwick bent down and drew tight the short end with his teeth; then, hearing a sound behind him, raised his head quickly and glanced over his shoulder.

The hatred of the last six months was in that moment. The blood of Joseph Pierce—the gnawing reproach of his own cowardice—the longing to be free from all the secret ill his heart had known and suffered, cried out to him. The hurt that never can be healed—the burning shame of Patty—his Patty—little mouse—led astray and ruined by the cursed cunning of a murdering rogue, who should be swinging in the wind and rotting long ago upon the wayside gibbet-tree, was swelling in his heart. At sight of him, in his frenzy he grasped the stake in both hands, rushed forward, set his teeth, and struck with all his might. There was no help for it—no hope. Without cry or moan the groover dropped forward upon the stones.

Now, his anger gone, John Winterhead stood dazed and weak, looking at what he had done.

The knot, not yet securely tied, slipped again. The bundle burst abroad; a part of the contents fell out upon the shale. He was so shaken that, although it happened straight before his eyes, he started and looked around the cave, half fearing to see some one there. Then he was taken by a fierce desire to hide what he had done and get away unseen.

His strength returned. His senses became so keen that he noted every little thing, and saw a meaning where he did not understand. Some tools—a shovel, crowbar, pickaxe, and the hook with which the bushes had been cut back—were laid together close by the mouth of the entrance. They were ready to be taken away. There was a basket, too, filled, and covered with a cloth. Upon the slab of white stone lay a door-key. Ay, Sophia gave up the key of Ubley last night. The things upon the ground belonged to Patty. Many of them he knew well. The likeness of her mother cut in black paper. Strange that it should be here. Yet that was meant for Ubley, for it had been packed. Everything in the cave was just 'han' pat' to be carried away. They must be leaving, not meaning to come again.

The thought flashed upon him that the bottom of the deepest disused mine upon the hills was not more secret than this place. The dead man might lie there lost until the crack of doom. He had only to cut away the trees after the cliff's edge, and not a soul could come a-nigh the ledge. And not a stain of blood was on his hands or clothes. Let him do that quickly, and then back to his wheat. Nothing could ever be brought to light; or if so, he alone would know the truth. It was safer than the murder of Joseph Pierce.

He threw down the hazel stick, caught up the hook, and went out upon the ledge. He stood a moment and glanced anxiously across the gap. He had seen, and another might see him. He cursed himself for a coward, to be haunted by these idle fears. Not once in ten years did any set foot on the other side. He went on to the bushes.

But the noise of chopping, the crash of falling boughs, when people might be passing up or down the road! Better leave it until dusk.

He dragged away all the wattling and cast it down out of sight. Here and there he cut out a growing stick, leaving a space, wide to step, from stem to stem. Then he hid the hook under a stone, and hurried down the slope towards Charterhouse.

Within sight of the homestead he turned off and went into the wheat-field, as if he were but just come out from house.

The commonplace doings of everyday life sounded strange, and he walked on like one in a dream.

The mirth had grown more noisy whilst he was away. The men, their hats trimmed with flowers, were working with a will, pitching and loading with all the pride of strength. They had

got it under-leg, as they say. They could see the end of it, and every mote would be to mow by dark. They had not missed him, as it seemed, or at least they said nothing.

He found his pick stuck in the ground where he had left it, and turned to with all his might. There was relief in labour, and in his excitement he beat the best. The folk were all laughing, a-telling how they had hauled one o' Blagdon home to mow; and how he hollared 'Murder!' to be sure, enough to rear the place. And every whip's-while as they pitched, the carter's boy shouted 'Hol' vast!' and the waggon moved on again down the field.

Then John Winterhead became boisterous beyond himself.

'Never mind to pick it up too tidy, my lads,' he cried. 'Let the leazers have a good picking to year. You can turn in, Ann, so soon as you be a-minded. You that do work here, do ee hear, Isaac?' and he turned round to the labouring folk.

One might well have thought that between earth and sky was no such thing as care.

But all the while John Winterhead was thinking that when it came to the last load he must slip across to the cliffs and get home again before the neighbours were ready to go indoors. For Charterhouse to-night was like to be as full as a fair. Well, he was glad of it. Everything being safe, the talk would help him to forget. Then again, as if there were some meaning in it, and the two things hung together, his heart kept saying, that he, John Winterhead, had done the thing he hid.

It was just in the dimmet when the work was done. The waggon had gone on. The last of the neighbours were together by the hedgerow as he came up to put on his jacket.

'Get on all o' ee,' he cried. 'I've a-got a thing or two to zee to, an' I'll catch ee up.'

He stood watching them through the gate, and waited until their voices died low in the distance. The broad stubble grew a paler yellow under the fading sky. The field was empty, but for the one sheaf standing in the middle to hold the leazing until the folk of Charterhouse had picked up first. Partridges, driven out by the reapers, now that all was still, began to call their scattered coveys home.

This was his moment, whilst light enough to see, yet so dumpsy, a man could scarce read another's face across a road. But after the turn o' the year, days close in very fast; and when he came into the hollow of the gloomy cliffs it was already almost dark. In his hurry to get back he lost no time. He quickly cut

away the trees, and hurrying by way of the drove between Black rocks, soon came within hearing of home.

What a racket they were making at Charterhouse to be sure!

We have a-done. We have a-done.
An' a good loaf o' bread.

Then they had tipped the mow and were all around a-top to have a last drink before they went indoors.

John Winterhead quickened his pace. Everything was safe. He had not met a soul nor so much as heard a footstep, and now he was within sight of home.

Suddenly his courage fell. Unknown to himself, he had brought away Standerwick's hook and still carried it in his hand. What did it matter? That was of no account. Yet to find it there gave him a turn which made every pulse throb. He was in the home-field. In another minute he might have taken it into the house, and like enough Patty would have known. He turned aside, went up to the orchard copse, and threw it far as he could amongst the trees.

The kitchen, by the time he got there, was full of noise and folk. For Jims Matravis had a-brought in the neck as dry as flour, and there stood Solomon, his arms held down straight as pump-handles, dripping wet and drenched to the skin. And such a chackle as there was with the women's tongues to be sure!

'For Solomon didn't ha' the neck, look-y-zee.'

'No, no, 't were long Jims what had the neck.'

'Ha! ha! An' Solomon wi' a little half-peck measure under the coat o' un took the ducking.'

'Ay! Massy 'pon us! Sophia Pierce poured a whole milk pail down 'pon top o' un from little winder up above dairy door.'

'And the maid wur out to porch—'

'So she wur—'

'An' so Jims all unbeknow'd sneaked in by the back—'

'Well then. Where wur Patty?' 'Ay, where wur Patty?'

'Now, where *wur* Patty?'

From all sides this question greeted John Winterhead's ears as he hastened into the house.

The harvest supper was spread, and midway down the table stood the neck. Not a drop had touched it, that was the main thing, for the harvester who got it wet was not to drink that night, and all the women in the house might lie in wait, however

they would, to throw water by the bucketful at any who came in. So there was point in this inquiry as to Patty's whereabouts.

Her absence struck John Winterhead as strange.

Sophia, busy about the serving-up, pushed by him, and he followed down the passage into the back-house.

'Where's Patty?' he asked uneasily.

'She've a-locked herzelf up in her room. She've a-carr'd up paper an' ink. An' she do sobby fit to break the heart o' her. She—'

Sophia spoke in the rapid whisper of a tell-tale seeking to curry favour, but John Winterhead cut her short.

'What's it about? Has she got herself into trouble do ee think? Speak out.'

He looked keenly at Sophia as if suspicious that she knew more than she told.

'But didn' you meet wi' her?' she asked in real surprise. 'I put it down you and she mus' ha' had a few words.'

He felt the wisdom of keeping to himself what he had seen.

'I went on a fool's errand,' he said gruffly. 'Not a living soul went up or down the road as I could zee. I had better by far ha' stayed where I was.'

His words sounded so rough, that Sophia fired up at once.

'I had better ha' held my tongue, sim-zo,' she cried sharply. 'But that's always the way, if you do meddle, mean as well as you mid.'

She made as if to go about the work, but he laid his hand upon her arm and held her back.

'Look here, Sophia,' he said in her ear in a softer tone. 'Run up an' try to get the maid to come down. You can do it. Zay the supper is in, an' folk 'ull wonder.' Then his voice became quite coaxing. 'An' try to worm out what 'tis all about. I shall take it a kindness if you could—so there.'

She snatched a candle from the bench and went at once. He waited in the dark by the foot of the stairs and listened. The door of Patty's room was close at hand, but not a sound of tapping nor so much as a word did he hear, and scarcely was Sophia out of sight before she came hurrying down again.

'There's nobbody there,' she cried in great excitement. 'The door was open wide. But on the counterpane, so as to catch the eye to once, was this.'

She held towards him a letter. Upon the envelope was his name in Patty's hand.

He tore it open. 'Gie us the light,' he said impatiently.

He turned his back upon her and held the candle close above the paper the better to see. Sophia, standing on the bottom step, leaned forward and peered over his shoulder as he read.

Dear Father,—I could not bear to speak it to your face and so I take my pen to write and tell what I have a-done. Oh, father, what will you think when you do find that I be gone from Charterhouse. But I be gone, dear father, to my husband's home. I am married to Giles Standerwick. We was married by licence to Shiphэм Church up a month agone, and nobbody have ever found it out. Oh, father, I was afeard to breathe a word because you thought so bad of Giles and said such things. But if you do but think how he have raised hisself you will see he is a good man. You would respeck him if you saw that. And my heart were set upon him, dear father, so I could never love another in this world. If I could not marry him I would sooner die, for I never thought of any other man. And so you must forgive me, father, when you see I am not here, seeing I have only gone to Ubley, to the home my husband have a-made.

There the poor girl, not knowing how to write, had stopped, and then below she simply signed her name. It stretched across the sheet with letters dwindling small towards the end to crush them in.

Martha Standerwick.

Unseen of anyone a gleam of satisfaction brightened Sophia's face, but John Winterhead burst out like a man distracted.

'She's to Ubley! Fetch her back, Sophia! I'd make it wo'th your while. You should never repent o' it, if you could catch her afore she do get there and bring her back here safe. She's all I've a-got. All I do live for——'

He stopped and moaned. Clearly before his mind rose a vision of Ubley, dark and empty, and the little mouse shut out alone.

'I'll saddle the mare and overtake her, an' bring her back,' he cried in an agony, and turned towards the door.

Sophia stood in the way.

'But you can't part man and wife,' she said.

'I mus' bring her back, if 'tis afore me on the pommel,' he wailed.

But the cry was of weakness not of will, and he wrung his hands where of old he would have clenched his fists.

Just then the harvesters and neighbours in the kitchen laughed afresh.

Quick as thought Sophia saw her chance. His love for Patty must soon overcome his dislike for Standerwick, and then all would be friends. She would advise him well and win his gratitude.

'I tell ee what, Mr. Winterhead,' she urged, with a wealth of common sense that sounded like warmth of heart, 'fetch 'em both, here—right. There's a houseful of folk. What's a-done is a-past mending. Put on a good face an' make the best of it, Mr. Winterhead. The young Giles Standerwick is well-liked, an' every tongue ull praise ee for it. Then to-morrow you'll be glad, an' zay Sophia Pierce wur the best friend you ever had in all your life. You will, Mr. Winterhead.'

His face turned white as ashes. He moistened his dry lips but did not speak.

'Go on an' do it to once,' she cried quite gaily.

She took him by the arm and led him to the door. Her voice, hard as it was, sounded soft and womanly. 'I'll keep back the supper. I'll look to everything for ee, as if 'twere my own. Don't ee gie it another thought but fetch 'em both.'

Too dazed to answer, he went as if to do as he was bid. Only one purpose stood out clearly in the wild confusion of his mind. To find Patty and persuade her to come home.

The mare's hoofs rattled away upon the road. He would tole the girl back with kind words—'wi' kind words,' he kept saying to himself.

But neither at Ubley nor elsewhere was any trace of Patty to be found.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FALL.

DAY after day went creeping by, but no tidings of Patty came to Charterhouse.

Her secret marriage and sudden disappearance were the tale of the whole country and the talk of every hearth. There were tongues enough to carry it abroad, sure enough, for the harvesters who sat waiting for their supper could tell the rights of it, and no mistake. How it was after midnight before John Winterhead came in. And he looked like one beside himself, and would taste

neither bit nor sup. Patty was gone. He should never see her again. That was all his cry. For Ubley was shut up, with not a living soul about the place.

For a week he was like a madman, riding from outlying farm to farm to ask if Patty had been seen. He was so terrible fond of the maid, folk said, that it had half turned his head. Yet not a man or woman upon the hills believed that she had come to any harm. Some even laughed. Husband and wife had gone away together, as was nothing but right they should. Lauk! The young Giles Standerwick was such a likely young fellow, sure. Patty Winterhead was nothing to blame at all.

After dark, John Winterhead sat in the chimney-corner, so they said, and never spoke.

Night after night, out of kindness of heart, the neighbours dropped in, one at a time or two together, and reasoned with him to cheer up his heart.

Solomon from the first could see through it all as clear as daylight.

He wagged his head and held out his fat finger. He set his faith on Milemas—old Milemas day. ‘Ah, Mr. Winterhead,’ he said, in the most comfortable voice that ever wheezed under a weight of wisdom, ‘you do trouble yourself too much. Why, the young couple be but keeping out o’ the way for a bit, for the gossip to blow over like. And though Ubley is agreed about, there’s no money to pass till Milemas. Milemas day. That’s the day, Mr. Winterhead. Then you’ll zee they’ll be home to Ubley, so brisk as birds in spring—no fear.’

But Milemas rolled by and not a sound was heard.

Then Solomon wagged the other way.

‘Sure now, Mr. Winterhead,’ he said, ‘there’s many about thought Ubley too much of a mouthful for young Giles Standerwick’s means. Depen’ pon it, at the las’ moment he zaw that, an’ perhaps wi’ one thing an’ t’other were glad to get away. An’ he dursn’t let out where he is for the time being, now he’ve a-run word about the lan’. But you’ll hear, Mr. Winterhead, so sure as the light.’

The well-meant foolishness of Solomon’s friendly talk was more than John Winterhead could bear. He did not doubt what had happened. Patty finding Ubley shut, and broken-hearted when Standerwick did not come, had made away with herself. She was lying in some forsaken pit, never again to see the light. As Solomon babbled on, with empty words barren of all comfort, John

Winterhead scarce knew how to hold his peace. He could not listen and sit still. He felt that he must start up, then and there, Sophia sitting by in the bright fire-light, and shout out all he had done. Even to tell was not enough. He must throw the truth into the face of Solomon's smiling nothings. 'It's a lie! She'll never come back. I killed the man wi' my own hands, and he's lying in a cave. An' the little mouse have a-brokt her heart for love, an' drowed herzelf away.'

The impulse to do this grew so strong, that at times he could bear himself no longer. He needs must go or speak. Then he would get up without a word and walk out into the night. Hours he wandered under the calm starlight upon the lonely hill, and in the ferment of his brain, thoughts, strange and deep, came to him he knew not whence. He had done the thing he hid. It held together and was all of a piece. That haunted him like a superstition, half-believed, but never to be cast off. And always the words he had said, when they talked that night of sheep-stealing and the hanging of the old Standerwick, kept buzzing in his brain: 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' It was like a prophecy as well as a command. It had worked out twice but wrong. Yet the life he took was owing to the law. Even now, this winter assize, by good right the young Giles Standerwick was a dead man. Ay, but after fair trial. Like a threatening shadow, darker than the night, came to him the old saying, 'Murder will out.' For still a life was owing to the law.

No matter how late he returned, if it were morning, Solomon was still in the kitchen when he went in. Sophia was afeard to go to bed, she said, with the house empty, the door unlocked, and him so strange in his ways.

Yet in spite of his distress of mind, John Winterhead went about the farm by day as if all his thoughts were bent only upon Charterhouse, the cattle, and the plough. His sense of duty to the land remained unshaken, though his joy in it was gone. He turned up his wheat-arrish betime for a long winter fallow. It was his pride in himself that he had lost.

If he had only fought Standerwick when first the talk was of Ubley, and killed him fair and square, he could have looked himself in the face and said he was the better man. There would have been no pricking of the conscience then, even though it were wise to keep the matter secret. That would have wiped out the recollection of the past and set him free, and Patty would be there still. For her, more than his own safety, he held his tongue and kept back poor Joseph Pierce's last words. But there had

been no happiness since, and never could be again. There was no more good in life. As well give himself up and have done with it.

And yet that every mouth should blab his story, and every idle fellow upon the hills walk down to Wells to gape at John Winterhead, a prisoner in the dock, that held him back. The disgrace of it made him shudder. His fathers, dead and gone from him who first got Charterhouse and passed it on, must turn in their graves if they could know such shame had fallen upon the name. And he, the last of the Winterheads too! That had troubled him many a time. If Patty married, at his death he always meant the man to take the name by will.

Then for a while his mind was made up. He must marry Sophia Pierce, save every penny that did not go upon the land, but do his best for that, heart and soul. He had thought before now to plant a narrow copse of Scotch fir and beeches just where the south-west gale drives so bleak over the brow. He would put it in hand at once; ay, and year by year enclose the waste, and lime the grass grounds, say twenty acres a spring, till all were done, and begin again. Please God to send one to come after, he might stand up a prouder man than any gone before.

But what if Patty had only run away and were still alive. In his heart was no hope of this; but the uncertainty came back again and again to hinder all he did.

So the weeks passed, and winter was drawing nigh apace. Over everything hung the gloom of later fall. Hedgerows were red and yellow, the leaves, scanty and parched, had almost gone from orchard and copse. Overhead were clouds, and mud with pools of shining water underfoot. And from behind Black Down came the cry of the wind with coming rain.

They had been winnowing the day before, and John Winterhead was standing by the barn's door. A man kept going to and fro, carrying wheat across the barton and up the stone steps leading to the granary. As he came by the sack slipped, and he let it down. It splashed into a deep puddle at John Winterhead's feet, and bespattered him.

'What, can't you hold up a zack o' wheat?' he blazed up, in the sudden fury of a temper over-wrought. 'There, lef' it alone. I'd rather do it myzelf than I'd stan' to watch sich a fool of a feller.'

Suiting his action to the word, he strode into the barn and put off his hat. The sacks stood ready one upon the other against the spirting-board. He set his back to the nearest and took it up. Through all his life it had been his pride to be able to do anything

better than any man whom he could hire. But to-day he staggered under the weight. As he stepped from the barn's floor on to the open ground he tottered as if he were drunk, and then fell all along-straight on the pitching of pebbles in front of the door.

The man ran to help, but he angrily set him aside.

'I—I catched my heel,' he faltered as he scrambled to his feet. His face was red with shame, his eyes downcast with humiliation. He had torn a three-cornered rent in the elbow of his jacket. 'Yes, I hitched my voot again the stone,' and he pointed to a pebble higher than the rest.

'Catch hold,' he cried, for his spirit was up and he was not to be beat.

Together they lifted the sack upon the low barton wall. Then he set his teeth and carried it up the steps into the granary.

He sat down. His knees were still shaking from the shock of the fall, but his courage was so broken that he could have cried. John Winterhead was not the man he was. He would never again be what he used to be. The truth hung heavily upon his heart beyond all that his soul could carry.

In the end wall of the granary was a small square window looking up the road, and through it he saw the constable strolling down to Charterhouse. It was a slack time o' the year, and Solomon had looked in pretty often of late. He stopped on his way and looked down the valley across the home field. Glad of the excuse to get away from the barton, John Winterhead went out to meet him.

'Ho! ho!' roared Solomon, laughing to see the mud. 'What's this then—what's this?'

'I—I hitched my voot, wi' a zack o' wheat to my back,' explained John Winterhead irritably, and Solomon laughed again.

Then he pointed to the welsh-nut tree.

'Why, you never picked your nuts to year, Mr. Winterhead,' he said in his sing-song voice. 'You forgot all about it, didn' ee? Ha! ha! An' the rooks carr'd 'em off, every one. But rooks,' Solomon shook his head wisely, 'rooks be most wonderful fond o' welsh-nuts.'

Even now upon the bare branch sat a solitary sentinel, and as Solomon raised his arm a flock of birds rose from the grass below and flew in circles above the head of the tree. A host of sad memories crowded into John Winterhead's brain.

No, the welsh-nuts were not picked. That was because Patty was not there. How she used to harp to be sure, till she could get the chaps to climb and knock them off the boughs with poles,

ay, and go for days with fingers brown as the old clock, and sit at night with a lapful, and crack, and throw the empty shells upon the fire.

Quick as thought he turned to Solomon. His face was pale, his lips quivered, but his eyes were firm, and stared so fiercely that the other wavered under his gaze.

'Constable,' he said hoarsely, 'I've a-got something on my mind that I be bound to tell. My heart can't hold it. Come wi' me. Come.'

He pushed open the gate.

Solomon Moggridge stood in doubt and scratched his poll.

'But you'll catch cold if you do go abroad wi' no hat, this time o' year an' all,' he urged with his unfailing good nature.

With a gesture of impatience John Winterhead beckoned and led the way.

There was a beaten path across the grass field winding with the undulations of the ground, and Solomon followed some paces behind. Over the stony hill, through the dead bracken and brown gorse, John Winterhead neither spoke nor turned his head until they came to the cliff's edge. Then with one hand he took Solomon by the arm.

Solomon drew back. It struck him that trouble had turned the brain of John Winterhead.

'Constable,' he began in a low deliberate tone, 'I've a-brought ee here to gie myzef up. I've a-done murder. I be boun' to speak, for I can't live wi' the thought o' it. 'Twere the young Giles Standerwick that killed poor Joseph Pierce. The old man told me so, wi' his dying breath. But I held my tongue. For peace an' quiet wi' the groovers I kep' it dark. But knowing what I did I hated the feller. 'Twere like poison to me, to zee the gallows rogue about. An' then he took up wi' Patty, an' I fell 'pon un an' killed un. Ay, an' the maid have a-made away wi' herzef for the loss o' un.'

Whilst speaking he had raised his voice to the highest pitch of excitement. An echo from the rocks before him threw back his words.

'Hush ! Mr. Winterhead,' breathed Solomon in a frightened whisper, and glanced on all sides and behind. 'If there's any-bddy about they'll hear.'

'Let 'em hear. They mus' know zoon enough. I do call ee by your title, constable, an' gie myzef up.'

'But what have ee done wi'—wi' the body ?' gasped Solomon.

He was very pale, and shivered as if with cold. John Winter-

head still held him by the arm. To have seen them, one might have thought that he was the wrong-doer, whom Justice had just taken in her grip.

John Winterhead pointed across the gorge.

'You do zee the lynch. Behind the ivy is a hole into a cave. 'Tis partly open from above, and light——'

'But how could such a place be foun' out?' put in the constable. 'A man mid climb down to one side by help of a waggon-line, but if he did he'd never find it. Or if he chanced to fall upon it, ten to one he'd never go in. Or if he should, what is there to show who did it? Keep counsel, Mr. Winterhead. Keep your own counsel, an' t'ull never come to light.'

But his earnestness did not move John Winterhead.

'I'd sooner die than carr' about the thought o' it,' he replied doggedly. 'For I tell ee, Solomon, what 'tis. I never had fear in my life till I thought o' the house an' the little maid, an' hid what I should ha' spoke. I cheated the law then; an' I've never a-had peace o' mind since nor contentment in myzelf. But I've a-got no fear now—so help me God, I've a-got no fear! an' I'll gie myzelf up.'

The storm came rolling on. A fine drizzle had begun to fall. The distant hills were all hidden in mist, and even the cliffs close by grew dim as the slanting rain was driven up the gorge.

'But what good could it do? An' think o' the disgrace. An' what if the little maid have only hid herzelf away, an' should be alive to know it all? She couldn' be wi' her Aunt Maria, I suppose.'

At mention of that name Solomon blushed. 'No, Mr. Winterhead, constable or no constable, we've a-bin neighbours all our lives, an' you'll think better o' what you've a-zaid. Come on; we shall be wet to the skin.'

Yielding to this persuasion, without another word John Winterhead suffered himself to be led home; but at the corner of the barton wall they parted, for Solomon refused to come on to the house. Like enough he would drop in after dark, he said.

John Winterhead sat down in his accustomed seat. The unburdening of his secret, like the laying down a load upon the way, though it must be taken up again, brought him passing ease. The words of the constable had touched a tender place in his heart. A mere fool's saying, that about Aunt Maria; but what if the little mouse might be alive—hiding away—in fear and shame of being left? Some one, mayhap, knew about the wedding—some one of Standerwick's friends or kin—to whom her

first thought would be to run. With what contempt he had looked on Standerwick because his father was hanged ; and this disgrace must fall upon the little mouse if ever she should be found. For the first time the hope kindled within him that Patty might some day come back.

The afternoon went by, but as night drew on the storm only gained in strength.

Gusts of wind roared in the great chimney and beat down the smoke, and the rain rattled against the window, as Sophia said, 'a'most fit to break the panes.' Early after supper she left him and went to bed. Mr. Moggridge held sense enough in the head o' un to bide at home, she would be bound. But John Winterhead sat where he was.

He had given up all thought that the constable would come, when the door creaked, and without knocking Solomon walked in. He wore a sack bag over his shoulders like a cape, and under it his Sunday flop-tail coat. He looked like a man going a-courtin', only he bore a countenance both frightened and grave. He shook the rain off his hat upon the floor, and that duty done, sat down upon the settle.

'I wur so good as my word, you see,' he said, glancing anxiously round the kitchen.

'I thought you'd come,' replied John Winterhead.

'Sophia out o' hearing ?'

'Ay.'

'A-bed ?'

'Ay.'

The constable moistened his lips as if about to speak, and swallowed as if the words stuck in his throat. Then he bent down and built together the burning sticks, without need, just to spend time.

'No, I wur never a fair-weather friend ; but to-night I had somethen to zay. I couldn' lef' ee in doubt, Mr. Winterhead.'

As he rose slowly from the hearth and took his seat John Winterhead fixed his eyes keenly upon him. The constable had thought, and come to say that he must do his duty.

'I don't deny, Mr. Winterhead,' Solomon went on with constant pauses, and a puzzled look upon his face as if words dodged him and were hard to find, 'I don't deny I didn't believe what you told me. I allowed in my mind that—that trouble had a-turned the brain o' ee ; but I've a-bin down over the cliff. There could be no better time, for the rain wur thick as a misk,

an' not a soul about to zee. I wur wet drough every rag an' stitch, but I found you had a-told true. 'Twur just the very zame as you zaid, only—'

John Winterhead leaned forward.

'What? Have anybeddy foun' it out?'

'Ay,' replied the constable slowly. 'There was another in the cave.'

Still the truth did not come to John Winterhead.

'She do lie by his zide wi' the arms o' her roun' his neck,' said Solomon. 'She mus' a-broke the heart o' her for love, for there's a bastick a-packed wi' victuals a-put down where you do jus' go in.'

John Winterhead stared at the constable. Then the meaning came home to him. He covered his face and cried.

They talked no more, until in the small hours of early morning he stood up and held out his hand.

'Good-bye, Solomon,' he said quite firmly. 'I don't ask ee any more to take me, but I'll go on.'

It was on the tip of the constable's tongue again to argue that nobody need ever know, but overwhelmed by the sadness of it all he held his peace, awe-stricken and dumbfounded by the quiet self-possession of John Winterhead.

Mile after mile, through the darkness, the wind, and the rain, John Winterhead trudged along the lonely road that runs throughout the ridge of the hills. When morning opened, a grey old city with square towers loomed out before him and below. But he did not falter. On and on he went slowly down the hillside to give himself up.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE END.

APRIL again. Over towards Ubley the cuckoo was calling, and swallows, with here and there a 'devil-scritch,' darted to and fro along the road. The primroses were out most beautiful in the valley, and cowslips in the lew between Black rocks; some of them so big as oxslips too. Buds were swelling—the lilac bushes thick in leaf. Again the sunlight shone across the stacks, and glistened upon the ivy too. The grass was fresh and green, for Mother Earth enrobed herself anew, caring no more for what was past and gone than the merry thrushes for their last year's brood.

Sophia Pierce was waiting by the porch alone, just where last year she watched with little Patty Winterhead. The length and breadth of Mendip was as bare as then. Neither man nor woman came in sight upon the hills. They were all gone as before, far away across the moors.

Sophia walked restlessly up the path and stood by the gate. There had been so much talk, and now all was over.

After John Winterhead gave himself up and was taken to gaol, she stayed at Charterhouse as caretaker. Solomon looked over day by day, and they put in the crops most wonderful well. Solomon was a tidy farmer, mind, for all his simple ways, and John Winterhead could have done no better himself. So everybody agreed, and the neighbours were all glad. They looked to see John Winterhead back after a while; for, as Solomon argued, and, sure then, his law ought to be good, he being a constable——

'If 'twere a fight there's no murder; an' if 'tweden a fight, 'twere a sudden occasion; so that if John Winterhead struck a blow that chanced to kill, be it in anger but wi'out intent, look-y-zee, why then 'tis manslaughter, an' not o' the wo'st neither.' And all the fireside gossip was of one tale; that never a jury in Somerset, knowing the rights o' it, and one or two maybe acquainted with the man, would convict.

Jims Matravis and one o' Blagdon had come to words the day before yesterday, as they jogged along together to Wells to hear the trial. Jims was most terrible afeard that John Winterhead would get two years. But one o' Blagdon said, 'Never in this world—not wi' a good counsellor to plead for un. Not a day more 'an six months.' And so they contradicted and wrangled all along the road.

But neither subtleties nor good-will were to be of any account.

John Winterhead had kept counsel so well, that not even his own lawyer knew what was in his mind.

The neighbours saw him standing in the dock, and called upon to plead. The court was still. Every eye was bent upon him, for his story was in every mouth; folk were craning forward to hear him speak.

'Guilty,' he answered, in a voice low but clear.

A rustle of surprise passed over the rows of people who heard.

Then followed remonstrance and whispered explanation, as if he could not know what he was doing. But John Winterhead stood firm. He only knew what was in his thoughts, he said, and he had no mind to hide or keep anything back. If he had always given the law its own, all would have been well. If he had never

seen fear to speak out and act the honesty in his heart, there was never a thing on earth could have come nigh to hurt him. He would rather die than lie and live with the thought of what was past.

So there was nothing for it but to pass sentence. That was but one clear day ago, for in those days the law was swift; and now Sophia was watching once again to see the people back from Hang Fair.

They were so slow in coming that she could be still no longer. She took the path which Patty had trod so often, and went down the drove to the head of Cheddar gorge and waited. The place was quite solitary. Not a sound broke in upon her ear. The tall cliffs towered cold and grey on either side, and she glanced up at the narrow ledge and shuddered. If she had never set John Winterhead to watch, Patty would have been at Ubley now, and she mayhap mistress of Charterhouse. Yet how was she to know? It was not her fault. But whilst she reasoned thus she could not reassure herself; and slowly over the lonely hills the dusk crept on.

From down the gap came the sound of horses' hoofs. So they were coming. Yes. That was the 'clacketty-clack' of Solomon's cob, sure enough. She leaned forward, looking for them to loom out of the darkness into sight.

They rode on in silence. Yet when they saw her by the gate beside the bit of copse, one o' Blagdon whispered to Solomon and they drew rein.

It was all over—ay, all over, they said. Then they told John Winterhead's last words—that he was willing to die as ever he had been to pay a debt in all his life; and Solomon cried like a child. He should never take delight in being constable or anything again, he sobbed.

Yet Solomon, strange as it may seem, some while afterwards married Aunt Maria, and lived happy to a fine old age, as a good heart should.

And Sophia got her chance like the rest, for she wed wi' the one o' Blagdon that gave Patty the pretty little pig.

And Charterhouse was sold—Cousin Selina became well-off—and Cousin Selina's Emily Jane was the wife of Tom Duckett, whose name mayhap you have heard.

And still the ancient, weather-beaten rocks look down, cold and unchangeable, as if human love and passion, sorrow and tears, are all too brief to be of moment in the vast immensity of time.

THE END.

A Farmer's Year.

BEING HIS COMMONPLACE BOOK FOR 1898.

IV.

The Wind in the Pines—Candlemas Day—Sheep and Heat—The Influence of Frost—First Snow—Thrashing, Old and New—Rooks and Mawkins—Sale of the Sick Ox—The Art of Ploughing—Intelligence of Farm Horses—Autopsy of the Sick Ox—The Crying Evil of the Tied House Monopoly—The Power of the Brewers—Purchase of Bungay Castle by the Duke of Norfolk—Miss Pegoty's Misfortune—The Turkey and the Cock—The Terrier and the Hen—A Peaceful Scene—Rate of Wages—Sale of Bullocks—County Council Election—Parish Councils a Failure—Drilling Barley—Marking of Trees—Growth and Management of Timber.

FEBRUARY 1.—Last night there was a sharp rain, but the month has opened with a beautiful day, more like April than February weather, the thermometer marking 53 degrees in the shade and on a north wall. In the afternoon I went over to Bedingham, where the oats were being drilled, four bushels of them to the acre. They went in rather indifferently, for last night's rain has already affected this cold and sticky soil; also the long manure which, having no other available, we were obliged to use for this field, No. 13, interfered somewhat with the action of the drill. The pease with which the remaining half of the same field is sown, went in well this afternoon, when the land had dried somewhat in the stiff west wind. To-morrow, if the rain holds off, we propose to drill barley at Bedingham.

February 3.—Yesterday was much colder, with a strong nor'-west wind, increasing to a gale, and a good deal of bright sunshine. There is one plough going on All Hallows Farm, thwarting for root, but all the other horses are at Bedingham drilling, or trying to drill, barley, except one that is carting root into the shed. We have set a fold for sheep on the three-acre pasture, No. 11. This was the first field that I laid down for permanent grass, and is the worst land that I have on the farm, the seven-acre, No. 10, opposite to it not excepted. It has now been down for about six years and has reached a rather critical stage in the life-history of a pasture. As a good deal of moss and many daisies have appeared in places among the herbage, we have come

to the conclusion that the best chance of turning it into a really sound pasture is to sheep it heavily and afterwards to harrow it and give it a good sprinkling of clover seed.

The sky last night looked heavy and grey, as though snow were coming. There was a very fine sunset, the lights upon the Common reflected in long lines and arrows from the clouds above being unusually beautiful. I know of few more curious and dreary sounds—though in a way it is an attractive music enough—than that of the wind rushing through the pine-trees on the Bath Hills as it comes to the ear of the listener standing on the slope below; I can only compare it to that of Æolian harps, there is the same sweet dreariness about the quality of the note.

Yesterday was Candlemas Day, and again, if we may trust to proverbs, the farmer's outlook is black enough. For what say the wise saws?

The hind had as soon see his wife on her bier
As on Candlemas Day that the sun should shine clear;

which suggests that the average hind is deeply interested in agriculture and not much in his wife. The shepherd, indeed, is still more decided on the point, for of him it is said :

If Candlemas Day be bright and clear,
The shepherd had *rather* see his wife on her bier.

It is a wise proverb that urges,

Lock in the barn on Candlemas Day
Half your corn and half of your hay,

calling attention as it does to the fact that in this climate the 2nd February is often for all practical purposes mid-winter. Here is another saying :

If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,
Winter will have another flight;
But if it be dark with clouds and rain,
Winter is gone and will not come again.

And another :

As far as the sun shines in on Candlemas Day,
So far the snow will blow in afore May.

Two more and good-bye to Candlemas :

Where the wind is on Candlemas Day,
There it will stick till the end of May.

Si sol splendescat Maria purificante,
Major erit glacies post festum quam fuit ante.

Of all of which proverbs we shall learn the truth or falsity if we live long enough to prove them.

To-day the weather is squally, with cold rain and fine intervals. We began to thrash this morning, but were obliged to give up about eleven o'clock. It is very curious to observe how absolutely indifferent the lambs seem to cold. One would think that the icy blasts of wind blowing on their wet skins would freeze them through, but they seem to mind these very little. Sheep are naturally cold-loving animals. Occasionally they shiver when penned up wet in a high wind, but it is heat that really makes them miserable, and flies, which are worse to them even than the heat. If they were left untended in many parts of the country, however plentiful and good their food, I believe that sheep would soon die out, if only from this plague, against which they seem quite unable to protect themselves. I suppose that where they thrive naturally, as on the mountains of Scotland and Wales, the flies are much fewer, perhaps owing to the constant movement of winds at those altitudes.

It may be asked how the sheep manage in the East, where flies are many, and I can only answer that I do not know, for though I think that I have seen them in Egypt and Cyprus, I neglected to make inquiries. Nor did I ever keep any sheep when farming in South Africa, so am ignorant of their treatment in that country; but I am sure that if they are as susceptible to the fly pest there as here, great numbers must die unless they are very strictly looked after. Last year, notwithstanding constant dressing, I nearly lost two ewes out of my small flock from this cause. One got a sore upon her neck, which it was vain to bandage, for as fast as the cloths were tied on the foolish thing tore them off with her sharp hoofs, with the result that she went about all the summer with black lumps of flies feasting on her wounds. Another suffered from an abscess behind, produced by flies, the pain of which seemed to drive the poor creature almost mad. I remember that on one occasion she left the flock and returned to the back lawn from nearly a mile away, breaking through the fences in order to get there. Here I found her lying panting on her side. When disturbed, she would stagger to her feet, run a hundred yards or so like a demented thing, and then lie down again. I thought that she must die, but with care she recovered, and, indeed, has recently lambed.

In the afternoon I went to Bedingham, where I found the men opening the water-furrows on field No. 5, which they had

drilled with barley yesterday, the seed going in fairly well. To-day they have drilled nothing, as most of the six acres to be sown has proved intractable. Three times did the horses drag it with the heavy harrows, until they were quite exhausted indeed; but the chief result seemed to be that they rolled over the tough clods instead of breaking them up. As it chanced, however, about an acre and a half of this field was got up before Christmas and received the benefit of the only frosts that we have had this season. The results serve to show how necessary is the action of frost to the securing of a good tilth on land of this character, for whereas there was plenty of mould on the acre and a half, the remainder of the piece which had been wetted by the showers was strewn with unbreakable lumps of clay. This acre and a half Moore began to drill late in the evening, just as I was starting home. The rest I told him to leave for the present and to return the drill to Ditchingham early to-morrow.

February 4.—To-day is much colder, with occasional storms of snow and hail driven by a high nor'-west wind. As I write, for the first time during the present winter the lawn is white. The weather is not bad enough, however, to stop the thrashing. The steamer began to work at the All Hallows Farm on the little stack of barley from the five-and-a-half-acre piece of glebe land, No. 38. Now it is that we see what a drought, such as we had last year, means upon these light lands, for this barley is not yielding more than four coomb an acre. Next the wheat from the All Hallows six-acre, No. 29, was dealt with. This is a good piece of stiffish land, so here the tale was different. Notwithstanding that the corn suffered a great deal from the attacks of sparrows, it cast about ten coomb an acre—a result which in so poor a wheat year may be considered satisfactory. When these stacks were finished the machine moved to the Home Farm (smashing a gate in the process) and began to thrash the oats and beans from the nine-acre pit field, No. 23. These are pedigree black oats, which we are now trying for the first time. The return seems to be good considering the year, about sixteen coomb an acre, I think. The beans also are thrashing out well, about eleven coomb to the acre.

It is curious to look at the steamer and listen to its hungry hum as it devours sheaf after sheaf of corn, and to compare it with the style of thrashing that I can remember when I was a boy. Now the straw is tossed automatically to the elevator, or to the pitchforks of those who are stacking it; the husk is shaken out and rejected, grit and stones are caught and cast away, and

the pure grain is sorted into three or four classes in accordance with the size and quality of the kernels, all by the ingenious mechanism of a not very complicated machine. In the old days the thrashing was done by an instrument like a large windlass, with four or six horses attached to the spokes and a man seated on a little stool in the centre armed with a long whip to keep them up to their work as they walked round and round. The actual machinery that did the thrashing was hidden inside a barn, and I cannot remember sufficient of its details to describe it. I do, however, remember seeing the flail used from time to time, the last occasion being not more than fifteen years ago. From a flail to a modern steam-thrasher is a long stride, and the time and labour saved by the latter are almost incalculable. Yet I fancy that farming paid better in the days of flails and reaping hooks than it does now in those of steamers and self-binders.

In walking round the farm this afternoon I noticed that the rooks are playing havoc on the three acres of mixed grain which we drilled a few days ago for sheep food on No. 24. They are congregated there literally by scores, and if you shout at them to frighten them away, they satisfy themselves by retiring to some trees near at hand and awaiting your departure to renew their operations. The beans attract them most, and their method of reducing these into possession is to walk down the lines of the drill until they (as I suppose) smell a bean underneath. Then they bore down with their strong beaks and extract it, leaving a neat little hole to show that they have been there. Maize they love even better than beans; indeed, it is difficult to keep them off a field sown with that crop. Hood promises to set up some mawkins to fright them, but the mawkin now-a-days is a poor creature compared with what he used to be, and it is a wonder that any experienced rook consents to be scared by him. Thirty years or so ago he was really a work of art, with a hat, a coat, a stick, and sometimes a painted face, ferocious enough to frighten a little boy in the twilight, let alone a bird. Now a rag or two and a jumble-sale cloth cap are considered sufficient, backed up generally by the argument, which may prove more effective, of a dead rook tied up by the leg to a stick.

- In the course of my walk I came across sheep's-parsley in bloom and, in sheltered places, honeysuckle and the arum-like plants which we call 'lords and ladies' in full leaf.

February 6.—Yesterday we had heavy snowstorms with intervals of sunshine, which left the ground quite deep in thawing

snow. The ox, of which I have already spoken, has turned sick again, so, as he is a big brute, with a good deal of meat on his bones, Hood came to the conclusion, and I agreed with him, that rather than run any further risk we had better sell him for whatever he would fetch. Accordingly the butcher from Bungay was sent for, and after some bargaining offered 12*l.* for him as he stood, that is 1*l.* less than he cost some months ago. So he went away, taking his inefficient third stomach with him, if indeed it is his third stomach which is to blame, which I doubt, and very glad we were to see the last of him. Before he departed Mr. Little made a drawing of him as he stood in a place by himself, a melancholy and rather dangerous-looking object, gloomy-eyed and hump-backed, from time to time producing a strange grating noise by grinding his teeth together. My own belief is that the animal has some obstruction fixed in his liver, perhaps a bit of stick or glass which he has picked up in his travels from market to market. However, we shall hear all about it in a day or two.

In the afternoon, having studied the theory of ploughing, Mr. Little and I proceeded to put it into practice on All Hallows six-acres, No. 29, which was being thwarted for root. Ploughing, I can assure the reader, is one of those things that, like writing romances, looks a great deal easier than it is. The observer, standing by a gate to watch a man with a pair of horses strolling up and down a field for hours on end, if inexperienced, is apt to conclude that beyond the physical endurance involved there is not much in it. Let him take the pair of horses, however, and follow this pastoral pursuit for, say, an hour, and he will come away with a greatly increased respect for Mr. Hodge.

To begin with, the setting out of a field to plough in accordance with the kind of work selected as suitable to the purpose for which it is being cultivated, is by no means an easy matter. (If anyone doubts this statement, let him consult Stephens's diagrams, and try to work them out.) Nor is it easy to keep a perfectly straight line, or, by pressing too much, or too little, on the plough handles, not to cause undesirable variations of depth in the furrow. But all this is simplicity itself compared to what happens when you get to the end of the field and have to turn round. Even if you have mastered the mystic word, or rather noise—it sounds like *wo-is-sh Dlun* (Dlun represents the name of the mare, which afterwards you ascertain to be 'Darling')—the Open Sesame, at the sound of which, and at nothing else, the horses will turn at

all—the probability is that you bring them round too sharply, throwing the plough on to its side and yourself into the ditch. Or perhaps you bring them round too widely, with the result that you find yourself a yard or two beyond the spot where you purposed to begin the new furrow, wondering vaguely how you are going to drag a heavy plough and two very solid horses back into position.

The end of it is that, having in vain endeavoured to take the half-sarcastic counsel offered to you by Mr. Hodge, who at last feels himself your superior, as, if all the truth were known, he very likely is in more than ploughing, you wipe your perspiring brow and present him with the handles and a shilling. These things, and others, I observed happening to my companion yesterday afternoon. For my own part, whether by good luck or good management modesty forbids me to say, with the exception of a few *contre-temps* unworthy of notice, I got on exceedingly well.

The intelligence evinced by farm-horses at ploughing, and indeed all other work—if only you are master of the language which they understand—always strikes me as astonishing. The carriage and riding horse is generally very much of a fool and misbehaves himself, or gets frightened, or runs away upon most convenient occasions. How different it is with his humble farm-yard cousin, who, through heat or cold, sun or snow, plods on hour after hour at his appointed task, never stepping aside or drawing a false line, always obedient to the voice of his driver, and, provided he is fairly fed and rested, always ready for his work the long year through. I often wonder whether, taken as a class, the common plough-horse is really more intelligent than the aristocrat of the stable, or whether it is simply that the latter has, as a rule, so little to do and so much to eat that he seldom comes to understand the responsibilities of life. On the whole, however, I am inclined to believe that countless generations of semi-intelligent labour, that is, labour in which the animal takes what seems to be a thinking part, have really given it more brain and thinking power than belong to the class of horses used only occasionally, and, for the most part, for the purposes of pleasure.

To-day, Sunday, there were showers of snow and sleet in the morning, though after church the sun came out. In the afternoon it was dull again, with a strong west wind; but the moonrise to-night was one of the most lovely that I have seen for a long time. In front of where I stood, on the top of Hollow Hill, lay a stretch of bare plough, bordered by a little belt of plantation. Above these

trees the moon, full, and bright, and round, appeared in a perfectly clear sky, turning the tree-tops and the cold purple plough silver with her light.

February 10.—For the last three days all the available carts have been at work carting litter out of the yards. The weather has been bright and colder, with slight frosts at night, which have done much good. The manure, I may explain, is carted on to a heap in the field for which it is intended, where it heats. After about fourteen days it can be turned so that the bottom of the heap becomes the top, and to do this properly is part of the mystery of farming. Then it heats again, after which, shortened and sweetened, it is fit to go upon the earth. This heating kills all seeds of docks or other rubbish that may have been brought in with the hay or straw. Also it breaks up and decomposes the fibre of the straw, so that it becomes more readily incorporated with the land. Summer muck, being much shorter owing to its containing less straw, is often carted straight on to the land without being 'haled' or heaped. The manure this year should be of good quality, as so little rain has fallen to wash the yards and spoil it. Before another winter comes round, I hope to have most of it safe under cover of iron-roofed sheds.

To-day is Bungay Market, and Hood sold about fifty-six coomb of wheat grown on the All Hallows land at 18s. 3d. the coomb of 18 stone, or 36s. 6d. the quarter. This is sixpence less than he was offered last week, but the markets for corn are so dreadfully uncertain, and so much at the mercy of American 'corners' and speculators in 'futures,' that it seems best to take it, as, for aught we know, by next market day wheat may be down two or three shillings a quarter. Of course, on the other hand, it may be up, especially as it is said that there is really a shortage in the world's supply. But this it is not safe to count on.

February 11.—To-day is dull and mild, with a very high glass. I hear that the sick ox, which was sold to the butcher, after its decease was found to be suffering, not from its third stomach, as the veterinary thought, nor from liver, as I thought, but from its brain, on which it had an abscess. When it was being driven away, the animal suddenly rolled over, though afterwards it picked itself up, and managed to get along in a lop-sided fashion. On dissection, the abscess was found to have burst recently, probably when it fell. No doubt it was caused in the first instance by a heavy blow over the eye. This may have been received on board ship, or more probably it was inflicted by a drover's stick.

The poor creature must have suffered greatly; indeed, it is wonderful that it did not either die or go mad. This is another caution against buying these store cattle, of which it is impossible to know the past history.

This afternoon I went to Bedingham, where I found the draining nearly finished, and Moore in sad straits to find bushes for the end of it. He has begun to plough this field, No. 18, that is to be planted with swedes and kohl rabi. First of all he runs the plough along the side of each drain, turning a spit of soil on to the loose lumps of earth with which it is roughly filled in. Then he sets to work in the ordinary fashion, although a newly drained field never looks quite neat after the first ploughing, owing to the clods of bottom clay with which it is sprinkled, the bits of stick and other débris, and the party-coloured lines which show where the trenches have been cut. The land at Bedingham looked drier to-day than I ever remember seeing it at this time of year.

February 19.—There has been little to record during the past week. The weather has been dull with a good deal of wind, which rose to a strong westerly gale on the 16th, and on the whole mild. We have been carting a good deal of manure from the various yards, also delivering the wheat which was sold upon the 12th after it had been cleaned, or dressed as we call it, in the winnowing machine. On the 17th we ploughed the Ape field, No. 27 (I wonder how it got that name, perhaps because a monkey escaped on it in some past age). This field is to be sown with barley, but as the soil has gone down tight, it was thought advisable to give it a second ploughing. The three ploughs finished it to-day and began re-ploughing No. 25, opposite, also for barley.

A day or two ago the principal inn in Bungay, called the King's Head, together with another inn in Bridge Street, was put up for public auction. I think that they are the last 'free' houses in the town; that is, houses of which the occupiers are entitled to sell any beer that they or their customers may prefer. All the other houses, and their name is legion, are 'tied' houses; in other words, they have been purchased by various firms of brewers, and are forced to sell the beer made by the owner exclusively, whether it be good, bad, or indifferent.¹ To my mind, speaking as the chairman of a bench of magistrates, who has now

¹ In some parts of England, I am told, the brewers oblige their nominees in tied houses to purchase through them groceries and other goods besides the drink they retail. This is an arrangement from which the firm supplying the articles sucks no small advantage, but I have not heard that it is in force in these counties.

had a good many years of experience in matters connected with the licensing of public houses, this 'tied' house system is a crying evil. Practically it constitutes a monopoly of the worst sort. The license granted by the magistrates is nothing more or less than an endowment, which, whatever may be the letter of the law, in fact, as opposed to theory, the bench has little power to refuse. Indeed, any such arbitrary act would be denounced and agitated against as an attempt to offer violence to that god of the English, the Rights of Property, unless it chanced that the management of the house had been reported against by the police and its license endorsed by the local bench.

When this happens—and it does not often happen, since for their own sakes the brewers are very careful whom they put in—it is the occupier who is dismissed, the house abides. On such occasions the brewer's agent appears, apologises for the trouble, and announces that the tenant has received notice or been got rid of, whereon the bench has practically no option but to admit any new nominee who can produce decent testimonials. The great value of such an endowment, even in the case of a quiet country town like Bungay, is shown by the fact that not many years ago the local branch of the Oddfellows purchased the King's Head for about 1,800*l.*, whereas at the recent auction it was sold for about 6,000*l.*, although I believe that the lease of the present tenant of the inn has some years to run, during which time he cannot be forced to sell any particular brand of beer or spirits.

I confess I am unable to understand the advantages of this system, that enables people with long purses to force the public to buy any yellow-coloured liquor which they choose to honour with the name of beer, although, in truth, in many instances it is scarcely more than a chemical compound manufactured from I know not what. The only explanation is that, being the wealthiest men and a ruling power in this land, the brewers are careful to stop any legislation which can possibly cut into their great profits.

As a further safeguard, most of them have made their businesses into public companies, in which they retain the controlling interest, thereby converting tens of thousands of small shareholders into their partners and enthusiastic supporters. How vast is the power exercised by them is well shown by the disaster that overtook the Liberal party when it made a platform plank of Local Option. Looking at that scheme from a practical and not a political point of view, I think, however, that it deserved to fail, because, as it seems to me, it would foster the very thing that I consider

such an evil—the indirect endowment of public-houses. It is not to be expected that any town in England would vote for the closing of all drinking places within its limits, as sometimes happens in America, nor will most people consider it desirable that this should be done. Therefore it is probable that what would happen is that a certain proportion of the houses would be penalised by a popular vote, while the value of others which escaped would be enormously enhanced. Nobody can be more convinced than I am that there are far too many public-houses; in Bungay, for instance—I think that I once reckoned in the course of a disputed licensing case—there is a liquor shop of one kind or another for every 100 of the total population. Yet as the people love to have it so, it seems impossible to escape the evil. Now, to make matters worse, the houses, or rather the licenses, have been bought up by the brewers and turned into a close monopoly.

Under these circumstances I suggest that as the first appears to be beyond remedy, the second ill, at any rate, might be combated by empowering the magistrates to grant a license to any and every respectable man who chooses to apply for it to sell liquors under strict police supervision. The effect of this would be that the brewers could not buy up an unlimited number of licenses; that the holders of licenses would be at liberty to supply sound liquor, which, in some instances at any rate, is not now the case, and that, as I believe, for the most part the number of liquor shops would not, in fact, be increased, since in the majority of towns and villages there are already as many as can possibly earn a livelihood.

I have no doubt that many objections can be urged against such a scheme, but at least this may be said in its favour, that it would tend to foster the sale of honest beer made from malt and hops.¹ People who study the subject have told me that almost as much drunkenness is occasioned by the deleterious quality as by the amount of drink consumed. At least, as it is difficult to imagine a worse state of affairs than that which exists at present, any reasonable remedy is worthy of consideration, even if it takes the shape of free trade in beer or of State control of its manufacture and distribution. At this contemplative stage, however, the matter is likely to rest, for the brewers have the British public by the throat, and, while their money commands so vast an influence, after the experience of the Liberals at the last election, no Govern-

¹ Since writing the above I have been informed that a scheme of this nature has been tried in Liverpool and failed. Even if this be so, it does not follow that regulations which have proved unsuitable to the needs of a huge city might not answer well in country towns and villages where the circumstances are totally different.

ment is likely to enter on the crusade of forcing them to loose their grip.

I am very glad to hear from the Duke of Norfolk that it is he who has purchased the King's Head, not that his Grace is connected with brewing or desires to turn that ancient hostelry into a tied house, but for quite another reason. At the back of the King's Head, and standing in its grounds, are the ruins of Bungay Castle, of which I have spoken in the introduction to this book—once the home of the Bigods, the predecessors of the Dukes of Norfolk. These ruins a good many years ago were, I believe, sold by the present Duke, who had never seen them, under some misapprehension as to their nature and extent. After various vicissitudes they were purchased by the Oddfellows for, I think, 200*l.*, and turned into the pleasure grounds of the inn. Now the Duke has had to give over 6,000*l.* to recover the home of his ancestors, but doubtless he will be able to recoup himself for the most of this outlay by re-selling the public-house. Indeed, should the brewer's mania for the acquisition of tied houses continue, I dare say that were he to keep the property in hand for a year or two, he might make a handsome profit on the transaction.

February 21.—Winter has come at last, for the thermometer shows that there were ten degrees of frost during the night. One of my best cows, Miss Pegotty by name, calved last night, or rather tried to calve, with the result that when Hood went into the cowhouse this morning he found the calf dead and the cow not far off it. I think that the dead calf was the largest that I ever saw, and the trouble was undoubtedly occasioned by nobody being with the cow. This sounds like carelessness, but in fact it is not always so. All mammals seem to prefer to produce their young at night, although in the case of cattle this rule has many exceptions. Therefore when a cow is over-due, and shows the usual signs of calving, the cowkeeper has to sit up night by night to watch her, until at last he is almost worn out. In the present case, for instance, I believe that Miss Pegotty has been expected to calve for the last fortnight, and that Hood and his brother have watched her for all that time. Last night, however, the signs of immediate calving vanished, and Hood, on whom the watching had devolved for several nights, thought that he was quite safe in taking a rest, with the result stated above. It will be a terrible business if we lose Miss Pegotty as well as her calf, for she is one of our most prolific and reliable cows. She has been dosed with a pint of whisky in gruel,

bat is quite unable to get on to her legs. The farrier has come to visit her, but does not recommend that she should be slung, as he thinks that the pressure of the slings might upset her inside, which indeed occurred to me as probable. I may explain that the slinging was suggested because it is feared that if she lies much longer she will get set fast with stiffness, and never find her feet again.

As I returned from the farmyard after visiting Miss Pegotty, I noticed one of the cocks in a dreadful condition. Its comb was nearly torn off, it seemed to be almost blind, and its neck was covered with blood. On inquiring the cause I discovered that it was not war with its own species which was to blame for these gory wounds, but rather the conduct of a certain turkey hen. This hen, for some reason best known to itself, has a grudge against that particular cock, and attacks it upon every occasion. The cock stands up to it as well as it can, but weight will tell, and that of this morning went near to proving his last fray. Indeed, I doubt whether he would survive another. Turkeys, so far as my observation goes, are singularly cruel and overbearing in their habits. Not long ago, in the little meadow on the All Hallows Farm, I found a cock lying on the ground, still alive, but absolutely pulled to pieces. Walking round him, and now and again inflicting a scientific and meditative peck upon some open wound, was the old gobbler who no doubt had previously reduced him to this sad condition.

Decidedly to-day was unlucky for fowls, for the two terrier dogs, Di and Dan, hunted and slew one of them in the shrubbery. They were caught in the act and received their just reward. Afterwards the hen, a very large one, was lashed to the younger dog, Dan, its legs being bound about his neck, and its head fastened under his stomach. For a while he sat looking the picture of dejection, his sharp nose poking out between its tail feathers; but I think his grief arose from the sense that he was an object of ridicule rather than from remorse for his crime. At any rate, as he could not gnaw the corpse off, or even walk away with it, after a while he turned it into a mattress, and spent the rest of the afternoon slumbering on the top of it, to all appearance utterly undisturbed in conscience. (Note.—No more dead hens have been found, but since then Dan has killed a duck.)

February 22.—Last night there were twelve degrees of frost, but the ground remains soft enough to allow of one plough working on some light land, the rest of the horses being employed in

carting manure. The cow, Miss Pegotty, is still unable to find the use of her hind legs, but in some extraordinary and unexplained way she has dragged and rolled herself the length of the cow-house, and through the open door into the hovel. Here she lies with sacks over her, shivering violently from time to time, and stretching out her head upon the straw in rather an alarming fashion. Her eyes, however, seem bright and healthy, also she can eat. Mustard is being rubbed upon her loins with the object of stimulating the muscles.

It is a curious day for the end of February; very clear, cold, and still, the sky heavy as though with snow, except when the sun breaks out, as it does from time to time. Standing by the gate of one of the new pastures behind the house, I was struck by the quiet and peacefulness of the scene. On the back lawn, at some distance from me, the lambs were playing, their bleating sounding loud in the stillness, while the green of the pasture was dotted here and there with feeding ewes, that looked extraordinarily white against the grey skyline. Near to me, and in the same field, grazed the two colts, till one of them, discovering my presence, ceased to nibble at the short brown grass and advanced gingerly, as though to inquire my business. Presently, having satisfied his curiosity, he wandered off again to join his companion.

Notwithstanding that the air was almost at freezing-point, the thrushes and blackbirds were singing in the little plantations round the house, though not with so full a voice as they sang a fortnight since, while from the tall hedgerow to my left came from time to time the insolent crow of a cock-pheasant, rejoicing, perhaps, that he had, and that his companions had not, escaped the guns. Presently a rustle caught my ear, and in the ground-ivy on the bank a yard or two away I perceived two little field-mice playing together, the rustle being caused by the stirring of the dead leaves and sere grasses as they moved among them. While I watched, one of these mice climbed up the stem of a maple bush in the fence, and began to nibble at it. Perhaps it was collecting materials for its nest, though of this I am not sure, as I do not know when these little creatures begin to mate. The rabbits, at any rate, are already breeding freely, for I have seen some half-grown young ones in the wood on the Bath Hills; indeed, I believe that in mild seasons they continue to multiply all through the winter. As I turned to go home, frightening away the mice by my movement, the Bungay church clock struck, and although it is a mile and a quarter distant, in that clear still air it sounded close at hand.

The labourers' rate of wages on this farm is now 13*s.* a week and harvest money. The milkman, however, who receives no harvest money, gets a cottage free instead. The man employed about the plantations and on odd jobs is paid 12*s.*, and an old fellow, who has been working as a stop-gap for the last six months, 11*s.* only. I wish that there were any reasonable prospect of wages increasing, but this is impossible until farming can be made to pay again. Under the present state of affairs, as it is the labour bill frequently devours all the profits.

To-day Hood sold two of the little red-poll bullocks, two-year-old things, to the butcher. There was a disagreement as to price, Hood asking 19*l.* apiece, and the butcher offering 17*l.* Finally, it was agreed that we should be paid by dead weight at the rate of 7*s.* a stone, which at present is the top price for prime beef in this neighbourhood. The butcher, I understand, lays the weight of the animals at forty-five stone each, while Hood estimates them at fifty.

This evening I went to support a neighbour who is standing for the County Council in this division. As a rule there is now little interest shown in these counties in elections to the Council, but, as it chances, in this parish there lives a gentleman of advanced views, a pedlar by profession, who, with a courage which does him credit in the face of an ever-increasing lack of support, fights the seat at each election, the more light-heartedly perhaps as I believe that the expenses of the contest are put upon the rates. It cannot be said that a meeting of this sort is otherwise than rather dreary, as it is impossible for the most eloquent speaker to become impassioned and absorbing on the subject of main or parish roads. Before I made my speech, however, as nobody seemed to have anything to ask, I put the candidate a question, and was glad to elicit from him the information that he would support a bye-law forcing all wheeled vehicles, as well as bicycles, to carry lighted lamps after dark. This is a regulation that would add greatly to the comfort and safety of the roads, especially near towns on a market-night.

There is no doubt that the County Councils have proved a great success and very useful to the community; but in our part of the world it is not always easy to find men to stand for them. Thus, at Bungay, the other day, I am told that there was considerable difficulty owing to the lack of a candidate, which was only got over by persuading the present excellent and worthy member to allow himself to be re-elected somewhat against his will.

But, if the interest in County Councils is waning, to judge from this village and others that I know of, that in Parish Councils is practically dead. At first there was a great excitement about them; I never remember seeing so many men in the Ditchingham school-room together as on the occasion of the election after the passing of the Act; but now it is a very different story. For the first two years I was chairman of our Parish Council, but I cannot say that we accomplished anything exciting. There was a good deal of talk about allotments, and applications were put in for a great number of acres of ground, but in the end the *bona fide* demand was satisfied by my offering a four-acre field to the Council, the third that I let in allotments. Also the parish charities were a burning question, but the matter was referred to the Commissioners, with the result that we are very much where we were before, excepting only that the charities have decreased in amount owing to the fall in the value of land. What excited most argument, however, was, I think, the question of a safe, which it was proposed to buy at a cost of 17*l.* I pointed out that speaking *prima facie*, and with a mind open to correction, it seemed useless to spend 17*l.* of the parish money upon a safe when we had few or no documents to put in it. But although the Council as a body admitted that there was some force in this argument, it was not held to be conclusive, since, urged the Opposition, there might at some future time be documents, and that then a safe would be greatly missed. The matter came up again and again, indeed, I am not sure that it was settled when, at last, I resigned the chairmanship. I did not again stand for the Parish Council, as it seemed to me that the amount of time spent in discussion was disproportionate to the results achieved. Possibly, however, we are an extra argumentative lot in Ditchingham, and in other parishes it may be different.

February 25.—I have been ill for the last few days and unable to go about the farm, but this afternoon I managed to get out for a little to see the drilling, until I chanced to meet the doctor, who sent me home. On the 23rd we drilled the oats on the top of the fourteen-acre on Baker's, No. 42, and on the 24th on the two pieces of glebe, Nos. 39 and 40. Here they went in but fairly well, for, after it has been ploughed for some weeks, this land, being so gravelly, has a tendency to set hard and impede the action of the drill.

The two bullocks which I mentioned as having been sold on the 22nd turned the scale when cleaned at 47*½* stone each, that is ex-

actly midway between the estimates of the seller and buyer. This is instructive, as it suggests that a man's perfectly honest prejudice in his own favour amounts to about five per cent. at least where cattle are concerned. It was supposed by both parties that one of these little bullocks weighed three stone more than the other. In fact, however, the difference was only three pounds, which shows how easily the best and most experienced judges may be deceived in their estimates of the weight of live stock.

Miss Pegotty, I am thankful to say, found her legs a day or two back and is now making a good recovery. Had it gone otherwise it would have been a sad loss.

To-day the Ape field, No. 27, was drilled with barley, which went in beautifully. When I crawled away in company with the doctor the drill had just moved into the four acres opposite, No. 25, but I do not know if it finished there to-night.

February 28.—On the 26th we drilled the three-and-a-half acres on All Hallows, No. 33, with barley. The cultivator, that is a heavy instrument with hook-shaped teeth, was put through it in the morning dragged by three horses, after which it was cross-harrowed. Thus it took all day to drill this little field and harrow the seed in.

Yesterday, Sunday, was squally and cold, with rain in the morning, and to-day there is a nor'-west gale with intervals of sunshine. We have dragged the nine-acre on All Hallows, No. 36, with the cultivator and drilled about half of it, the barley going in so well that I think it will puzzle the rooks to find it beneath the fine mould. This morning I was marking the trees that have to come out from the Bath Hills. We are so busy that it is hard to find time for tree-cutting this year, but as the Lodge has been let to a tenant for a term from next September, I am anxious to get them out and have done with it in order to avoid disturbance beyond the house during his occupation, as everything felled on that portion of the Vineyard Hills must be carted down the drive. Also, we need the timber for the iron-roofed sheds which I am anxious to put up over the various yards. It would be very bad economy to buy oak and deal when we have stuff that 'wants to come out' which will serve our turn. I know of nothing in life that needs more discretion than the marking of trees, unless it be an attempt to patch up a family quarrel. I am supposing, of course, that the trees are being cut more with a view to the advantage of the survivors and of the wood generally than for simple profit. One may have the very best intentions

and have studied the tree or trees from all standpoints and at every season of the year in order to decide which shall go and which shall stay, and then, after all, find that a mistake has been made. Also the error, if it be one, is so utterly irredeemable, for no ordinary person can hope to live long enough to repair it.

It is extraordinary, however, what growth trees will make during the span of a single life. Thus on the lawn of this house stand many good-sized timbers, elm, oak, beech, lime, and walnut. With the exception of the walnuts, which are ancient, every tree of them was planted within the memory of a relative, now just eighty years of age, who was living in this house at the time. Indeed, the man who actually set them was shoeing horses until, having been much hurt by a kick, he took to his bed and died not very long ago. It is not given to many to see oaks planted, cut down as good timber, seasoned, made into bookcases, window-frames, and shutters, and set up to furnish the room from which in childhood they watched the gardeners setting them; yet this has happened to the relative in question. Moreover, it is now some ten years since the trees were cut.

It should be added that there is something in this soil which is extraordinarily well suited to the needs of hardwood timber, which flourishes here exceedingly. This is shown by the fact that in Websdill Wood, at Bedingham, which is also a clay soil, though stiffer, the oaks, which seem to have been planted for many generations, are for the most part no larger than those upon this lawn. At any rate, old men at Bedingham have told me that they have not been able to notice any change in them since they were boys. The timber of the trees goes to corroborate this statement, as when we steam-sawed a lot of them a few years ago, I noticed that the wood was as hard as iron, and that there was very little or practically no 'sap,' that is, soft outer wood, which is useless for most purposes.

Altogether I think that I marked about fifty trees this morning, small for the most part and of every variety. Some of these I find, by the healed-up scars upon them, I have already marked in past years and then spared. Indeed, it is evident that in several instances I have done this twice, but the day of doom has come at last. The trees upon these Bath Hills have been very much neglected in past times; if some one had thinned them judiciously fifty years ago they would be much better specimens than they are at present. As it is, the younger trees have been allowed to crowd each other, and even to destroy and distort the

few old-established timbers by cutting off the air from their lower boughs and causing them to die.

I find, however, that there are two schools as regards the treatment of timber. The first, in which are included eight women out of ten, love to see trees of all sorts huddled up together as close as nature will allow them to exist—long, lank boles, with tufts of foliage on the top of them, and below a few dead or dying branches. He who ventures to suggest that it would be a good thing to let a little air into a thicket of this sort is generally received with indignation, and probably hears it stated afterwards: 'Oh, yes, So-and-so wants to cut down every tree he sees!' As a rule, indeed, such a plantation is too far gone to be touched with the object of improving the beauty of the specimens; also it is rather dangerous to let in the wind among these long-shanked fellows, for then more are apt to go than you wish to part with. I understand, also, that to grow timber in this fashion is the most profitable method of forestry; at least, I have observed very large woods managed thus in France and Germany, where I believe they understand such things. But, for beauty, surely there is nothing to equal trees as they are grown in an ordinary English covert, where they receive attention when the fell is cut, once in every seven years, and any which are not wanted are turned into profit.

On the lawn in front of this house stand four single trees, two beeches and two limes, which have never been crowded or deformed by the too close company of their kind. To my fancy those four trees are better worth looking at than all the dozens which surround them; indeed, the proportions of them are a pleasure to contemplate at every time of year. But about trees, as in other things, opinions vary.

This afternoon I had a discussion with Hood as to what should be done with the lambs. He is of opinion—and on the whole I agree with him—that it will be best to sell them all out and buy in some black-faced ewes in the autumn. I very much doubt whether it would pay to keep on these cross-bred 'gimmel' lambs and make ewes of them, as I think that they would lack size. So they will have to go, poor little things, and the Southdown ewes with them. I mean to keep to Southdown rams, however, as I am sure that the cross gives quality to the mutton.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

(To be continued.)

Midas.

LADY HARRIET TROTTER sat in the morning-room of her house in Berkeley Square. It was a well-proportioned, handsomely furnished apartment, with the stamp of money on every article it contained, and lacking nothing but that easy air of home comfort which many with very shabby surroundings prize more than damask and gilding. Lady Harriet—well dressed, well preserved, for she was considerably on the wrong side of forty—was looking attentively at the young girl who had half curled herself into the elegant lounging-chair drawn up on the opposite side near the fire. Her head was bent over a book, in which she was so engrossed that the different small manœuvres of Lady Harriet to attract her attention had so far failed to be noticed by her.

An adroit movement of her ladyship's foot made the poker clatter. This had the desired effect.

‘Oh! aunt, let me.’

The speaker was already on the hearthrug giving a vigorous poke to the fire. After which, by way of apology, she said, not without a glance of regret at the volume she had thrown down:

‘I must put away that book, it is too exciting. They're just engaged—they've been awfully in love all through the other two volumes, and now it has come right, and they are going to be married. I'm so glad; I hate bad endings.’

‘Then you think marriage a good ending?’

‘Well, yes—generally. Don't you?’

‘I do. I think for women it is the only proper ending; and, *à propos*, I think it's high time you got married, you know.’

‘So do I; but one cannot be a bride if there is no bridegroom, and the men seem singularly shy of wishing to perform that part with me.’

‘It fails me to think what the young men of the present day are coming to,’ and Lady Harriet gave a perplexed shake of her

head. 'It was quite different when I was a girl, Why, let me see, Mab, how old are you ?'

'Twenty-three on the next twenty-ninth of December as ever is.'

'Twenty-three !' the tone in which the words were said expressed the full gravity of the position. 'Why, at that age I was married, and was the mother of two children. I don't understand it, for I was not a beauty, and many persons think you very good-looking.'

'It's very nice of them.'

'And you get a fair share of attention, only it doesn't lead to anything ; you know, Mab,' and here the look became very reprobating, 'I greatly fear that in some way the fault lies with yourself.'

'No, aunt, really. Now, that isn't fair to me, because I do everything I can—indeed I do. You wouldn't have me say point-blank, "Will you marry me, please, young man ?" but, short of that, I call "Dilly dilly duck" to every eligible I'm introduced to.'

'My dear, this is no matter for trifling ; be serious.'

'But I am, no one could be more so.'

'Well, that is not the impression you give me. In anything of this kind I must say you are your father's own daughter. *He* can never be got to take things seriously.'

'And what a mercy, poor dear old dad, with nothing to call his own, and eight of us to provide for ! Oh ! Aunt Harriet, don't begrudge him his cheeriness. Why, it's all he has to live upon,' and the quick tears welled up and filled the sympathetic grey eyes.

Lady Harriet laid a kindly hand on her niece's shoulder.

'Don't think me hard on your father. It's not my wish to be that in any way, but we must all deplore his—what shall I call it ?—want of worldly wisdom.'

'Yes, I know,' and the smooth young brow was puckered in perplexity.

'If he would but consult Mr. Trotter' (Lady Harriet had never become sufficiently familiar with her husband to call him by his Christian name). 'Ask his advice—'

'But he does.'

'When the mischief is done, and the wisdom of a Solomon would not save him.'

'Uncle Trotter has been most kind, I know' (Mab's voice was

very humble now), 'but the darling old silly is so sanguine, and it's all on our account, and to put the boys out into the world. Oh ! if a bit of luck would only come, we should be as happy as the days are long. It's those dreadful calls that upset us so, and swallow up everything, Terence says.'

'Pray don't quote Terence, dear. Whatever he *says*, actions speak louder than words.'

'Why, he hasn't—'

'Yes he has—failed signally ; and,' she added, holding out a letter, 'your father finds a dozen excuses for him—in his not having a proper tutor, nor the advantages of a public school, &c. What Mr. Trotter will think, I don't know. Naturally, when he sees how much I do for my family, he expects to see something come of it, as I do.'

'And we all disappoint you.'

Mab's tears were flowing fast now. 'First I'm a failure, and now Terry.'

'No, no, dear,' and Lady Harriet's voice softened. 'I don't mean it in that way. If I have seemed over-anxious to see you married, it is because I know by myself how greatly you could help those at home. I was a young girl, Mab, when I accepted Mr. Trotter. I had all the illusions of eighteen, and all the prejudices of my rank.'

'Poor Aunt Harriet !'

'No, I don't know that I need pity. The wife of a rich man has many compensations, and I want you to realise this, because you are sometimes disposed to be rather hypercritical with those who but want a little encouragement, perhaps.'

Mab made no reply, but a guilty conscience showed itself in the blush which dyed her cheeks. 'Now, to-night,' continued her aunt, 'Mr. Trotter is bringing to dine with us a friend of his recently returned from Japan or Burmah, or some place where a great deal of money is made in whatever they grow there, and he said all he wanted now was a nice English wife.'

'Well, then, Providence has popped him down in the right place, for here she is, ready and willing. I don't care how old or how ugly he is, if he will only ask me to exchange the name of Charlville for—do you know his name, aunt ?'

'Brown, I think.'

'Brown will do ; Jones or Robinson would be the same to me.'

'You must get rid of this reckless mood, you know.' Lady

Harriet was looking anxious. 'It would be fatal to show any of that to him.'

'What am I to show, then?'

'Your own nice, natural self.'

Mab gave a bitter little laugh.

'No, no, not that; or I should say, "I don't want *you*, I want your money, you ugly, stupid old fogey."

'Mab, dear; Mab!'

'Oh! and lots more than that I should say; but I shan't say it. I shall look up, and look down, and smirk and smile until he thinks that I never met any one half as delightful as Mr. *Midas Brown*. For Midas he must be if this blue-blooded hand is to be given to him.'

That evening, a few minutes before eight o'clock, Lady Harriet, seated in an alcove at the far end of the drawing-room, was making the acquaintance of her new guest. She gave a sign to Mab to join them, saying:

'This is my niece, Miss Charlville, Mr. Brown. Her father—my brother—is good enough to lend her to me for a while.'

Mab held out her hand and stood a little embarrassed by the arrested look of a pair of steel-blue eyes, which seemed to penetrate her through and through.

'The friend of your uncle's I spoke to you of,' said Lady Harriet, rising to greet some fresh arrivals.

Already Mr. Brown was bowing over the stretched-out hand, murmuring something about the pleasure it gave him. Then he stood erect and seemed to let his eyes wander round the room. Inwardly he was recovering his balance, for in the few seconds that his gaze had rested on Mab twenty years had rolled away, and he was looking again on the face of the girl whose loss had kept him single.

'What a wonderful likeness!' he was saying, and suddenly he saw his former self; then the vision was blurred by the self he now was, and up leaped the thought, 'What does she think of me?'

If Mab's thoughts had spoken they would have said, 'Better than I expected—about dad's age, I should say. I suppose it is his face being so brown that makes his eyes look so blue.' And while these reflections chased each other she said aloud:

'I think I heard that you have been many years abroad, and have only just returned to England.'

'Yes; it is twenty-three years in December since I last said good-bye to London.'

'Fancy! Why, I was just getting born about that time.'

'What an old fellow, then, you must think me!'

'No, indeed; but I'm very fond of people older than myself. I'd rather have my father for a companion than anybody, and he's nearly fifty—dear old boy!'

Mr. Brown smiled. 'I remember when fifty seemed to me very old. I used to think that it could not matter much what happened to any one at fifty.'

'Oh! but there you were wrong. You can be very nice at fifty. I always tell my father that if I was not his daughter I should insist on being his wife. He would be obliged to marry me.'

Mr. Brown turned a very beaming look on her as he said: 'What a fortunate man! I feel very envious of him, being an old bachelor.'

But you need not be. You will find heaps of nice girls who think exactly as I do.'

'Oh! but this is most encouraging. Perhaps you may know some particular one to whom you could recommend me?'

'I might when I know what I have to recommend,' and she laughed gaily, and he laughed with her.

'It is a bargain,' he said; 'I must worm myself into your good graces as speedily as I can,' and obeying a look from Lady Harriet, he gave Mab his arm and took her in to dinner.

Three weeks had gone by since the night of that introduction.

To Lady Harriet and Mab Mr. Brown's name was a household word. That is, the name of Midas was, which Mab had given to him; and the intention of Midas was no longer a secret to any one.

'It is more than admiration, it is absolute infatuation,' Lady Harriet would say as she walked about, patting herself on the back at the success of her diplomacy.

At home all the boys talked about Mab and Midas and the jolly times in store for them, when Mab would give them everything they wanted and the dad needn't worry any more. Lady Harriet had covered reams to her brother with descriptions of his future son-in-law's wealth, generosity, adoration of Mab, and his delightful tact in not startling her by a too premature declaration. She by no means realised that this delightful tact was entirely owing to Mab's skilful manœuvres.

The girl was an enigma to herself. By nature frank, warm-hearted, impetuous, she had taken the very greatest liking for this man who, though double her own age, made himself a perfect companion to her. She felt all the subtle charm of having every wish anticipated, her desires watched for, and before she could express them, gratified. Horace Brown, too, at length realised that his wealth gave real pleasure to him. He was lavishing on Mab all the generosity he had longed to lavish on his former lost love. Beyond being her fresh, young self, Mab was to him the Celia of his youth, the ideal he had cherished for twenty years.

So delicious was this state that he trembled to put his fate to the test, and thus made it easier for Mab to execute her evasions.

'He is so generous, so good; I shall be so happy that I must love him,' she would tell herself. 'I do—I love him now,' she would say emphatically. Yes; but her conscience told her it was not with the love he would ask of her and which she would promise to give him. She knew that by the rebellion which was stirred whenever she chanced to be alone with him. A sudden revolt in her feelings would make her almost dislike him. She felt herself bristling like a porcupine.

Plainly matters could not stand long as they were, and one afternoon Lady Harriet, by a stroke of diplomacy, contrived that Mr. Brown should find Mab alone.

A something whispered to both that the hour had come. A wild desire seized Mab to jump up and run out of the room; and, although he in no way betrayed it, the lover himself felt horribly nervous. When it has had no practice for twenty years, love does not come very trippingly from the tongue.

'Oh!' thought Mab, 'I hope he'll get it over as quickly as he can. If he begins a lot about love I shall detest him, and if he kissed me I should die.'

But that was not the fashion in which Mr. Brown meant to do his wooing. He drew over a chair, and after a few moments' silence began :

'Miss Charlville, I want to tell you a small romance. Will you listen to it?'

She made a movement of assent.

'I think you know that I was the architect of my own fortune. I started in life poor in pocket, interest, friends, but passing rich in the love of a young girl who had promised to be my wife. Before I could succeed in making a home for her, death snatched

her from me, and I was left to feel only mocked by the wonderful tide of good fortune which suddenly came. In the years that went by no woman ever interested me, my cherished ideal was never dethroned ; but, grown tired of making money, I returned to England, where I felt very stranded and lonely. In a happy moment I came across Mr. Trotter, he asked me to dinner, and there—there’—and he made a pause and laid his hand on Mab’s arm—‘I met you. Did you notice how I looked at you ? I have wondered since that I did not catch you in my arms, for standing before me was the living semblance of the angel I had lost. You spoke—it was an echo of her voice. Her merry ways and saucy speeches, you had them all. Dinner was not half over before you had wound yourself round my heart so that when I left this house I trod on air and felt I was twenty-five again. Well, it is three weeks since that night, and each hour of each day the wonderful resemblance has grown upon me. In disposition, mind, character, you are her counterpart. The same generous, charming impetuosity ; the very temple of truth and honour.’

Mab had sat with her eyes turned from him, she had never once looked up. Now she felt that he had drawn nearer, he had taken her hand.

‘This prelude,’ he continued, ‘I felt was necessary to explain in some way what you may look upon as very great presumption. I am keenly alive to the fact that a gulf of twenty-three years has to be bridged over. Indeed, I should not have dared yet to put my hopes into words had not Lady Harriet given me the kindest encouragement by saying she might venture to tell me that she believed you were not wholly indifferent to me. Do not imagine that I expect from you the same measure of love I give. That would not be possible, for, by reason of the story you have heard, I have loved you as long as I knew what love meant. You have been my guiding star, my ideal. Can you be my wife?’

No answer came, and in a tone whose pleading was sharpened by anxiety, he added, ‘I know you will be frank with me. Remember, I expect very little. I only ask that in what you give me there is the germ of true love ; then—’

But a sudden movement stopped him.

A tornado of emotion seemed to have seized Mab. Her head was thrown back, her face was flushed, from her eyes the tears were falling.

‘It’s no use—no use !’ she cried, as if addressing some one in front of her. ‘Whatever they do or say, I cannot help it !’

'Help what, my dear?' asked Mr. Brown, alarmed.

'Help undeceiving you.' And, turning so that she might look straight at him, she said: 'I am not what you think I am, nor a bit like the good girl you loved before. It was because you had money I wanted to marry you. I made up mind to it before ever I saw you. Yes,' she added, in answer to something she saw in his face, 'I know you despise me, but I'd rather you did it now than after. If I'd married you I must have told you; because it isn't as if I didn't like you. I do. Nobody has ever been so much like dad as you are.'

'But your aunt—'

'Oh, yes! Can't you see Aunt Harriet had me here on purpose to marry me? and then the very day you were coming to dinner we heard that Terry had failed in his passing. He's my eldest brother. There are eight of us, and the poor dad had very little money to start with; and after mother died he thought he'd put what she had into a mine; and they made him a director. But, instead of the gold he was to get, they've done nothing but make him pay up. The gold is there, they say, but they haven't machinery enough to get at it; so they make calls on calls, and it's ruining the dad, and he can do nothing for the boys. And now I've failed him;' and Mab sobbed bitterly.

Mr. Brown, seeing the wreck of his hopes, could find nothing to say, but, cut to the heart by the sight of the girl's sorrow, he involuntarily patted her shoulder kindly.

Mab made a violent effort to stop her tears. 'I'm so sorry,' she said, 'but it was the only thing left me to do. I didn't mean to, though, until you told me about *her*, and what you thought of me. I'm not able to think of what Aunt Harriet will say. You see,' she seemed to add by way of apology, 'she had to swallow a gilded pill when she took Uncle Trotter. Oh, why weren't you like him, or old and ugly and disagreeable? then I could have married you!'

A softened expression came into Mr. Brown's face, and, turning, 'Mab,' he said—and it was the first time he had ever called her by that name—'you are a good girl. You have acted honourably by me.'

'No, you mustn't say that; it hurts me.'

'It need not do so, for I am going to ask for compensation. You cannot take me for a husband; well, then, you must have me as a friend.'

‘That’s just like you, to be so good to me, and makes me so horrid. It was a temptation, you see.’

‘It was, my poor child. I do see. But you must still let me help you. I have any number of openings for boys. Boys are a perfect godsend to me.’

Mab shook her head.

‘But you don’t know,’ she said. ‘I have laughed about you to them. I called you Midas, and they call you Midas to me. No, I don’t deserve any kindness from you.’

‘All the same, I deserve that you should show me some, and you have chattered about the boys until I know each one of them, Terry, Simon, Gerard. Their names, you see, are at my fingers’ ends.’

A watery little smile came into Mab’s face, and Mr. Brown continued, ‘It will be best for us all that I should go away for a little time, and when I come back——’

‘I sha’n’t be here. You don’t think Aunt Harriet would let me stay after this? and if she would, I couldn’t. I’m not afraid of dad. He’ll be disappointed, I know; but all the same he’ll understand.’

‘And think as I think, none the less of his daughter. Ah! Mab, had I been twenty-three, would you be sending me away?’

‘It would have made no difference. I shouldn’t have liked you a bit better, and the planning to catch you would have been just as hateful. Oh! I have had to make myself delightful to odious creatures of twenty-three, and, though Aunt Harriet doesn’t know it, haven’t I snubbed them!’

Mr. Brown laughed outright; then he took Mab’s hands in his, and held them while he looked at her wistful, tear-stained face.

‘Still friends,’ he said; ‘we must always be that, my dear.’

He touched her forehead with his lips. The door shut—he was gone.

Well, the ordinary pen is unable to do justice to the full details of the storm which followed. Words failed to give any expression to the feelings of Lady Harriet. She believed what she said, that Mab ought to be put under restraint, as no girl would have acted in the wicked, indelicate manner she had so long as her ordinary senses remained to her. The final straw was added to this burden of outrage when Mr. Charlville wrote desiring his daughter’s return home, and thoroughly approving of

the honourable way in which she had treated the offer made by her suitor.

Then Lady Harriet broke down, and declaring that the ingratitude of her family had so got on her nerves that she must have rest and relaxation, she bade farewell to Berkeley Square and Mr. Trotter, and the fashionable columns of the daily papers announced that, owing to delicate health, Lady Harriet Trotter had started for the Riviera, where she intended to spend the winter.

Mab, once more installed as queen in that Liberty Hall, her home, speedily regained her gaiety and good spirits, and as time went on it was universally agreed by her, the boys, and the dad that they had never had a more jolly winter, the reason of which was that Midas was their neighbour.

At first the girl was kept in ignorance of the interview and correspondence between Mr. Brown and her father. A little later she returned from a fortnight's visit to a school friend to find that the gentleman who had been expected at the Charlville Arms close by was Mr. Brown; that at his desire the boys continued to call him Midas, and that he was already established as one of the family. Home life being a novel experience to him, Mr. Brown took to it kindly. From feeling stranded and lonely, he suddenly found himself the centre of a hundred small interests. Games, cycling, fishing, skating, nothing had its full flavour unless Midas was enjoying it with them. He was full of schemes for the future of the boys, who, among themselves—for they were solemnly adjured never to as much as hint at the matter—agreed that for once in her life, by refusing to marry Midas, Mab had made a fool of herself.

Since the day they had parted in Berkeley Square neither by word nor sign had Mr. Brown ever reverted to the hopes he had formerly cherished. Except for the greater degree of courtesy and gentleness due to her sex, he treated Mab as he treated the boys, and, with the inconsistency that some claim to be the monopoly of women, down in the very depths of her heart Mab felt sore about this, especially when, as time went on, the feeling grew and rankled until she had to make an effort that she did not betray it by tongue or temper.

It was the 29th of December—Mab's birthday. The boys had each made their small offering, and in a body had borne to her in triumph a present of a new bicycle from Midas, who later in the day was coming to see her. After they had sufficiently extolled

the merits of this wonderful machine, had severally pointed out what it would do and what it would not do, and with admiration and affection had pawed it all over, they took their departure, and Mab was left alone with her father, who remained standing at the window.

After a few minutes he came over to the fire where Mab was sitting with her lap full of gifts, and stretching himself in his chair, 'I say, Mab,' he said, 'we shall miss Midas when he's gone, sha'n't we ?

Without answering, she gave a startled look.

'The foolish fellow wants to get married,' he continued. 'My word, if I'd had such a slap in the face as you gave him I'd take care no one else should give me another ; but there, man is born to sorrow, and I suppose Midas must fulfil his destiny.'

'Did he tell you ?'

'Yes. I fancy what made him was that his courage needed bolstering up. He wanted to know what I thought about the girl saying yes to him.'

'Why shouldn't she say yes ?' asked Mab fiercely.

'Well, my dear, I should say no one could answer that question better than yourself. You——'

'Yes, I know, dad. Never mind about me. Is she nice ? Where did he meet her ? Who is she ? Did he tell you ?'

'She's more than mortal, according to him. Generally the case before marriage. A pearl, a paragon, an angel too good for this world. There, I've known husbands hold the same opinion.'

'Dad, be serious, do.'

'What for ? Because old Midas wants to make a fool of himself for the second time ? Well, it is the second time. You know you would not have him.'

'Father'—Mab never used this appellation except under strain of great domestic tragedy—'I am surprised at you, knowing, as you do, what made me.'

'Yes, yes, that's all as it should be, my dear, but at the same time you felt you could never care for the man.'

'I felt nothing of the kind,' cried Mab passionately. 'I felt mean, false, an impostor—that's what I felt. He is what any one could love. I've never seen a man living half as good and generous and kind as he is ; and I only hope the girl is a nice girl, and will love him with all her heart and make him happy. If she doesn't, I shall hate her.' And she wound up her peroration with a flood of tears.

The hand of some one who must have been conveniently near was laid on her, and when a few minutes later she raised her face it was to see not her father, but Mr. Brown bending over her.

'Mab,' he said, 'can it be true? Are you mine?'

One look told her what he meant. Her answer was to throw herself into his arms. The dad had discreetly stolen out of the room.

LOUISA PARR.

The Coming of Age of the Queen of the Netherlands.

ON August 31, at ten o'clock in the morning, there was a service in all the churches throughout the Netherlands, to celebrate the coming of age of the Queen, who had completed her eighteenth year. True to the traditions of her forefathers, she had expressed a special wish to begin her reign by invoking, with her people, the blessing of God. No liturgy was written out for the occasion, but never were more fervent prayers sent up to Heaven nor more earnest addresses delivered than in the churches of all denominations on that day; and the National Hymn composed by Marnix of St. Aldegonde, in the storm and stress of the early part of the Eighty Years' War, rang through most of the sacred buildings. The Roman Catholic archbishop and bishops had issued a pastoral letter prescribing that Mass should be sung in all the Roman Catholic churches and followed by a Te Deum. The synagogues were decorated with flowers and impressive services were held, and the Chief Rabbi of the Portuguese community dwelt in his address on the gratitude which the Jewish people owe to the House of Orange, as under its protection they had always found a safe refuge in the Netherlands in times of persecution—a splendid testimony in these anti-Semitic days. All the foreign churches and representatives of foreign nations joined in the general commemoration of an event which was so full of significance for the Dutch nation.

Every one on that day and the following ones wore an orange ribbon on the breast, in hat or bonnet, in the hair, or round the waist. It was specially interesting in a rural district to see the countryman leave his harvest field, don his Sunday clothes, and listen attentively to an address which equalled in length the Sunday sermon. The national dress, which still lingers in some places, gave the congregation an old-world appearance, which seemed to bridge over the centuries and took one back to the days when the Dutch people and the House of Orange first became

united in the common bond of a great cause—the cause of liberty and religion. Some twenty years ago that bond threatened to be cut asunder, and the House of Orange to become extinct. The premature death in 1879 of the Prince of Orange—a strong, handsome, and accomplished man—following close upon that of the King's childless brother, had spread consternation through the land. The delicate health of Prince Alexander, who succeeded him as heir to the throne, gave great anxiety to the nation, and five years after he followed his brother into an early grave. Queen Sophy, their distinguished mother, a princess of Würtemberg, had gone before them, and was thus spared the sorrow which would have broken her heart. 'There is in the things of this world,' she once wrote, 'an invisible woof of heavenly causes which the religious eye perceives.' Her death was the sacrifice needed to save the dynasty. The King had married again—Princess Emma of Waldeck-Pyrmont—and the birth of a princess in 1880 was hailed with joy by the whole nation. When she was ten years old the King died, and she became Queen under the regency of her mother. It was reported that, young though she was, she realised the seriousness of being so early called to the throne. Under the wise direction of her mother her mind was applied to acquire the knowledge which would best fit her for the task of a constitutional sovereign, while her character was moulded in the noble traditions of her race. The two proclamations issued—one by the Queen-mother laying down the regency, the other by the young Queen assuming the reins of government—sum up the history of those years. 'The task confided to me in 1890,' says the Queen-Regent, 'will soon be accomplished. Mine is the invaluable privilege of seeing my beloved daughter reach the age when, according to the Constitution, she is called to the government. . . . My dearest wish is fulfilled.' And the Queen says to her people: 'My first word must be one of warm gratitude. From my earliest youth you have surrounded me with your love. From all parts of the kingdom, from all classes of society, from old and young, I have ever received the most striking tokens of affection. When I lost my beloved father, all your attachment to my house was transferred to me. Now that I am ready to assume the lofty but difficult task to which I am called, I feel, as it were, supported by your fidelity. . . . My dearly beloved mother, to whom I am inexpressibly indebted, set me the example of a noble and elevated conception of the duties which now devolve upon me.' For more than a year preparations had been made

throughout the country to celebrate the coming of age of Queen Wilhelmina, and every town and village had its festivities on the occasion. Triumphal arches, chiefly of fir branches, were erected, houses were hung with flags and orange streamers, and illuminated at night. The smallest streets in the towns were gracefully decorated, order reigned everywhere, and in the few towns where Socialism had made some adherents it had now to hide its diminished head. Historical processions, representing the times of the Spanish war and the heroes of the House of Orange, were innumerable. Old and young had their treats, and as bands were considered indispensable the festivals in country districts had to be celebrated on different days, which prolonged the holiday making far into September.

The decorations of Amsterdam were worthy of the capital of the country. The scaffolding erected in front of the houses to see the Queen's entry was painted with oranges, sunflowers, or other appropriate designs. The great houses on the canals vied with each other in the beauty of their ornamentation, which in some cases consisted of masses of the choicest flowers, which spread their fragrance all around. Oranges, orange flowers, such as the marigold and the red-poker, were prominent everywhere. The day of the Queen's entry, September 5, the canals were lined with crowded boats decorated with flags. The Queen, dressed in white, graceful and smiling, seated next to her mother, was received everywhere with indescribable enthusiasm. It was touching to see how the poorest parts of the town had exerted themselves to put on a festive appearance, and it must have struck foreigners how in the land of Rembrandt good taste everywhere prevailed. In the Jewish quarter the Queen was welcomed with the inscription from the Psalms, over a triumphal arch, 'He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.'

The Dutch are thorough in what they do, and when they amuse themselves they are probably more exuberant than any other nation. During the whole time of the festivities young men and women went in bands, arm in arm, dancing, or what the Dutch call 'hossen,' through the streets of Amsterdam, singing 'Orange' songs. Hundreds of peacock feathers were sold to stroke the passers by—an apparently innocent amusement, but condemned by the doctors as a propagator of microbes. Throwing 'serpentine,' or coils of coloured paper, was another favourite, and harmless, occupation.

The enthronement took place on September 6 in the Nieuwe

Kerk, an old church, notwithstanding its name, in which the great Dutch naval hero, De Ruyter, is buried. The church had been totally transformed. Masses of huge palms and trophies decorated the pillars; a throne and canopy had been erected in front of the handsome brass screen; on the credence table opposite lay the royal crown, the sceptre, the orb, and the Constitution bound in red velvet; and all around the church ran a scroll with the *Wilhelmus* hymn inscribed on it in the sixteenth-century spelling. Tribunes with raised seats had been erected on either side, and were filled with men in uniform and ladies in the brightest colours. The Ministers of the Crown and the States-General were seated opposite the throne. The scene on entering was very striking, but it was only the background of the imposing ceremony that followed. At the appointed time the Queen-Regent walked up the aisle and stood waiting for her daughter in front of the throne. Meanwhile, after a somewhat dull morning, the 'Orange sun,' which is in Holland the equivalent for 'Queen's weather,' had burst through the grey sky. When the young Queen entered in her coronation robe of red velvet and ermine, with a diamond tiara on her head, followed by all her Court, the choir sang the old national *Wilhelmus* hymn, the veil was withdrawn from the new commemoration window, representing a succession of ruling Princes of the House of Orange, and a flood of light spread over the scene. The Indian princes representing her Majesty's thirty-two millions of subjects in Java, Sumatra, and Borneo stood by the side of the throne. The Dutch Constitution prescribes that the enthronement shall take place in public, and hence fifty people from outside had been called in at the last moment.

The Queen's appearance was a revelation to her people. They had seen her among them as a child—'the adored child of the House of Orange-Nassau, the ideal of the Netherlands people,' as a preacher had described her the previous Sunday in the Amstel Church—she now appeared before them for the first time as their reigning Queen. With a complete mastery over herself, she addressed the States-General in words that came entirely from the inspiration of her own heart, in accents slow and impressive, and with a voice that rang clear and melodious through the large building :

'Called to the throne by the death of my never to be forgotten father, I have assumed the government after the wise and beneficent regency of my dearly beloved mother. My proclamation has announced this to my beloved people. The hour has come when I find myself in the midst of my faithful States-General, and when, under the invoca-

tion of God's holy name, I shall bind myself to my precious people to maintain their rights and liberties.

'Thus I consolidate to-day the close bond which exists between me and my people, and the ancient covenant between the Netherlands and the House of Orange. Beautiful is the task which God has laid on my shoulders. I feel happy to rule over the people of the Netherlands, who, though small in number, are great in virtue, great by nature and character. I esteem it a great privilege that it is my life's task and my duty to devote all my powers to the prosperity of my dear Fatherland.

'The words of my beloved father I make my own : "Orange can never, no never, do enough for the Netherlands."

'In fulfilling this task I require your assistance, gentlemen, members of the States-General. Let us work together for the happiness and prosperity of the Dutch people. May this be our goal.

'God bless us and our labours, that they may conduce to the welfare of the Fatherland.'

Then she solemnly read the oath ending with the words, which she fervently spoke with uplifted hand, 'So truly help me God Almighty.'

It was an inspiring moment, never to be forgotten by those who were present. A Dutch statesman afterwards said that he for the first time understood Joan of Arc. A strong emotion seized the thousands that were assembled, and enthusiastic cries of 'Long live the Queen !' rose, as with one voice, through the building. Then the President of the First Chamber addressed the Queen, and took the oath for the States-General collectively, which was afterwards confirmed by all present singly, either by oath or affirmation. Seven members opposed in principle to the monarchy did not appear. Whether they are nevertheless morally bound by the collective oath, and whether in that case they are not forsaking their principles by keeping their seats, is a question which has given rise to some discussion in the papers.

When, after the ceremony, the Queen appeared on the balcony of her palace, she was greeted with the most passionate enthusiasm. On the evening of that day a request was issued by her Majesty that as little noise as possible should be made round the palace on the Dam after eleven o'clock, in order that during those fatiguing days her night's rest might not be too much disturbed. A touching response was made to this by some of the people taking off their boots and shoes as they passed.

It has been observed that the ceremony at Amsterdam was a purely secular one in contrast to the coronation in Great Britain. The reason is evident : there is no State Church in Holland. All

denominations are subsidised, and hence the ceremony could have no ecclesiastical character. At the same time a strong religious atmosphere surrounded it. The words sung by the choir at the conclusion, to the melody of 'Now thank we all our God,' were an invocation. The Queen on her return to the Hague wished to have the same day a special Commemoration Service which was held in the Groote Kerk.

We have already mentioned that historical processions formed a prominent part of the festivities. The one at Amsterdam, which was got up by various industrial associations, surpassed all the others in splendour. The whole history of Holland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, symbolised by all its leading men in History, Art, and Science in the costumes of the time, passed through the streets of Amsterdam before the eyes of their Majesties and innumerable spectators. The illuminations were another striking feature. No one knows the poetry of illuminations who has not seen their reflections in water. The Venice of the North looked fairy-like, with its garlands of lights on the canals and the ships with all their rigging illuminated on the broad water of the Y. No less so the Houses of Parliament at The Hague, with their innumerable lights glittering like jewels in the water.

Among the most conspicuous attractions of the *fétes* were two exhibitions, one of memorials of the House of Orange-Nassau, the other of paintings of Rembrandt, which were opened by the Queen during her stay at Amsterdam. The Rembrandt Exhibition especially has drawn visitors from all parts of the world, who have had a unique opportunity of studying the different styles of the master side by side.

The members of the press who had been invited to the festivities have been most appreciative in their descriptions, and have given a more accurate account of Holland than one is accustomed to hear from foreigners. It was, however, a surprise to readers of a leading English paper to learn that William the Silent was a Frenchman! Had the writer understood the first lines of the old national hymn, 'Wilhelmus van Nassouwe, I am of German blood,' he would not have committed himself to such a statement. William the Silent's German ancestors were connected from very early times with the Netherlands, and the fact of his having inherited the Principality of Orange from his cousin, René de Chalon, who had died childless and who had in his turn inherited it from his uncle on the maternal side, Philibert de Chalon,

could by no effort of the imagination turn him into a Frenchman, any more than his having married two French wives.

The Dutch people have gratefully recognised how much indebted they are to the Queen-mother for the singleness of purpose with which she devoted herself to her daughter's education and fulfilled the duties of the regency; and the enthusiasm with which she has been greeted even at a time when the attention of the people was chiefly concentrated on their young Queen was a proof of it. A national presentation has been made to her by the Netherlands people at home and abroad as a token of their gratitude, a sum of 300,000 florins, and she has once more shown her devotion to the country by the destination she has given to this sum. With it she intends to found what has been her wish for a long time, 'a sanatorium for consumptive patients, in the first place for the benefit of those who are deprived of the means of seeking relief abroad from the terrible disease which, alas! is so common in our country.' Her Majesty means to give up to this purpose her country seat, Orange-Nassau near Renkum, which was bought for her by the late King. And part of the sum she will devote to a charitable object in the colonies.

No sovereign was ever more carefully brought up for the task of a ruler than Queen Wilhelmina. The Queen Regent herself mapped out the whole education, the number of hours to be devoted in due proportion to each subject during the available years. She wished her daughter's education to be truly national; hence her first teacher was the head of a public elementary school, Mr. Gediking, and he was directed to give the instruction as much as possible on the same lines as to his own pupils. The teaching embraced by degrees, besides the ordinary curriculum, natural history, physics, geology, geometry, and mathematics. Geology had a special attraction for the young Queen, and when she visited the Natural History Museum in London those who led her round were struck with her knowledge of the subject.

Meanwhile English was taught her by her English governess, Miss Saxton Winter, who remained till after the Queen's confirmation, two years ago; and she learned to speak French from a native of France before the age of nine, when she received her first lessons in French grammar and literature from Dr. Salverda de Grave, who was enabled at once to use French as the medium for teaching the language. It is never questioned in Holland—as it is, unfortunately, sometimes in England—that modern languages should be begun early in order not to absorb too much

of the time which, at a later period, is required for other subjects. German, which is an easy as well as a somewhat perplexing language to Dutch people on account of its resemblance to their own, was not begun till five years later, when Dr. Kossmann, from the gymnasium, gave her Majesty lessons in the language and literature. Dr. Salverda de Grave took some of the more advanced teaching in other subjects, such as geography and Dutch history and literature. The practical side of the teaching was never lost sight of. Thus the Queen-Regent desired that the study of geography should be combined with a survey of the political and economic conditions of the various countries, and that in connection with arithmetic the Queen should be made acquainted with some details of finance, monetary systems, loans, &c.

During the latter years of the Queen's education she was instructed by specialists, chiefly professors from the universities. One of the best historians of Holland, Professor Blok from Leiden, gave a course of Dutch history. Professor Kan taught physical and political geography; Professor Krämer, general history, and in connection with this subject he led the Queen through the British Museum on her visit to London. Dr. van de Stadt, headmaster of a school at Arnhem, continued the teaching of physics begun by Mr. Gediking, frequently using experiments and giving short biographies of the great men of science. Professor de Louter initiated her Majesty in the constitution of the Netherlands, in political law and economy, and colonial institutions. Dr. Hofstede de Groot gave her lessons in art history; Dr. Blink in cosmography. The Queen-Regent herself taught her daughter Bible history for ten years. After that the Court preacher, Dr. van der Flier, prepared her during two years for confirmation.

Finally Lieut.-General Kool and Rear-Admiral Stokhuyzen gave the Queen instruction in the organisation of army and navy, chiefly in their relation to the Crown.

Accomplishments like drawing and music were not neglected. The Queen showed the greater taste for drawing and a strong appreciation of art, especially national art. Plain needlework, which is too often looked upon as a subject of no importance in the education of women, was taught her from her earliest youth by her mother, and afterwards by a special mistress. To a strong and healthy nature like the Queen's, physical exercise, such as riding and skating, has always been a delight.

A paper has appeared in which the Queen's teachers give each a summary of the subject matter of their lessons and the methods

employed. What strikes one most in this account is the extreme vividness with which every subject was treated, so that it should be assimilated as living matter and as part of a whole, and the way in which the various subjects, such as history, geography, and literature, were taught in relation to one another. All educationalists have this ideal before them, and the Queen of Holland's education is a perfect model of the kind. No doubt the royal pupil had all the aptitude to make such methods a success—a quick grasp, an excellent memory, and a keen interest in her studies.

The Queen-Regent was present at almost all the lessons, and generally discussed the method with the teachers beforehand. In order that the Queen's undivided attention should be concentrated on the subject, she never made notes during the lesson, but these were kept for her use by her governess, and sometimes by the maids of honour. The Queen-Regent laid great stress on the study of history, especially that of the history of the Netherlands, as a valuable help in forming her daughter's mind and character, and she wished the account of the social and political evolution of the nation to have precedence over descriptions of battles and ancient treaties. Professor Blok, who for three years instructed her Majesty, illustrated his lessons with prints, medals, and coins, which were obtained for the purpose from different collections, and the artistic merits of which were also taken into account. In the same way Dr. Hofstede de Groot illustrated the history of Art with everything from public and private sources that could be brought to bear upon it, and visits to museums and journeys completed the lessons.

With a sovereign at their head who has ascended the throne under such circumstances as I have attempted to describe, and who has been animated from early youth with the most intense patriotism, the people of the Netherlands have every reason to look forward hopefully to the future. They and the House of Orange have had their differences in the course of centuries, but only to find in the end that the bond between them was indissoluble. In the love of their traditions, the Dutch possess a treasure which cannot be bought with gold. They see nations who have broken with their traditions driven hither and thither like ships without a rudder. So long as the people of the Netherlands remain true to their past, they can see the storms gather around them and say, with the great Silent, 'Saevis tranquillus in undis.'

ELISABETH LECKY.

Our Mary.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

SHE is not indigenous to the soil of Dulditch, our Mary, having been sent to us from a distant part of the county, a Heaven-given reply to our urgent prayer for some one to come and help us out of our muddle and take care of us.

It was the winter of our direst necessity. The Rector's wife newly dead; her baby left to me, the Rector's sister, a maiden lady with no knowledge of babyhood, to bring up as best I could; Guy, the other child, ill with whooping-cough; the Rector himself—always an unpractical, dreary-natured man, almost paralysed by the trouble which had befallen him—nearly useless as a guide or support in his disorganised household; the servants, as is the nature of their class, deserting us in our sorest need.

She was not a person of a promising appearance—the new 'general.' We groaned in spirit when she first made her appearance among us—an overgrown, freckle-faced, sandy-haired girl of sixteen, wearing her best frock, a garment of green merino trimmed with black braid, far above the tops of her heavy boots; her short white apron—there were no bibs to aprons in those days and no embroidery to adorn them—standing out stiffly from a huge waist; a lace tucker in the neck of her dress and round her beef-red wrists. I look back with a smile still to Mary's first appearance upon the scene.

I was sitting by the dining-room fire, the baby in her wicker cradle at my side, the nursery having been made over to Guy and his whooping-cough, when a startling knock at the door announced the new servant's arrival. To the present day our Mary insists on hammering at doors with a knuckle as hard as a poker, and with a vigour that is like to splinter the panels. A rush of cold air always enters with her.

'Ef ye please, miss, I'm come,' she announced.

With a sinking of the heart I murmured that I was pleased

to see her, and was going on faintly to speak to her about her future duties in the house—an oration upon which she intruded without any ceremony.

‘Ye look rare and comf’table—don’t ye?’ she inquired.

Her pale-blue eyes with the glitter in them, roved about the room. They fell at last upon the brown wicker cradle, and with a whoop and a swoop Mary had hurled herself into the room and fallen, so to say, upon the baby.

‘Well, ain’t she a rare po’r little thing!’ she remarked, with no consideration whatsoever for the feelings of the relatives of the infant under discussion. ‘Ain’t she got big eyes, nayther! My mother’s little Uthel, that ha’ got eyes as blew, but they ain’t so trumenjuous large!’

Upon these signs of friendly interest I asked her if she were specially fond of babies; and Mary, on her knees by the cot, looked up at me with her sidelong glance, which, darting forth from between her white lashes, has something sly and yet deprecating in it.

‘I’m fond of ‘em—bain’t yew?’ she inquired.

She had and has an incurably familiar manner; it is difficult to keep at a dignified distance from Mary.

‘She be a chokin’!’ she cried, looking back at the child. Her words filled me with terror. In my inexperience each fresh development of infantine ways was a cause of new alarm. ‘Tha’s ‘cos she’s a laying on her back. Yew shouldn’t shove little uns like her on their backses.’

Paying no heed to my feeble protests, she pulled the baby from the cradle. Her arms, awkward as they look, appear to have been made for the holding of children. The child, rocked in them, its little face pressed against the green frock, tight to bursting across Mary’s bosom, was soon asleep, and lay peacefully on Mary’s knees. She had sat down upon the hearthrug at my feet, her feet tucked under her, and she now looked critically down upon the infant, whose tiny hands she held locked in her red fists.

‘My mother’s little Uthel ‘ud make two on her,’ shes soliloquised. ‘Well, she du be a po’r little thing! I ‘spec’ she bain’t long for this wold,’ she continued; ‘and ‘ont that be a mussy, neither, when th’ Lord’ll take ‘er?’

I thought it less painful to decline the discussion of the baby’s future, and talked to Mary instead upon what would be her duties in the house. They were duties, I took occasion to

remark, with which the nursery and the children had nothing to do.

Mary gave me that sidelong glance which would so prejudice a physiognomist against her.

'When I ha' done my work I shall hold 'er, though,' she said, indicating the baby on her knees. 'I shall ha' ter hold her, du I shall miss my mother's little Uthel so trumenjuous!'

We thought from former experience that the work which fell to her share would probably exhaust the 'general's' energies, but we did not know our Mary. No amount of dishes to wash, of bread to bake, of floors to scrub, would keep her out of the nursery if Margaret cried, no remonstrance or entreaty or command. Nurse after nurse left on account of the 'general's' unwarrantable interference. Roused to indignation at last by the resignation of a really efficient nurse by whose experience we particularly desired the baby to profit, I gave Mary notice to quit.

Her sense of injury was great. She argued the point with me with much spirit.

'Ain't I kep' you straight and looked arter things?' she demanded. 'Don't your tea and sugar last twice as long since I'm here? Yew said it yerself. Bain't there as much again bread ate in the house since I ha' baked it? An' if so be as yew ate bread ye can't ate mate, and so your butcher's bill is seft' (saved).

I acknowledged our indebtedness to her in various ways, and commended her honesty and fidelity, but pointed out that the baby's nurse would not brook her interference.

'Yew and her want me niver so much as to touch th' baby, then?' she inquired slowly; and I confessed that that was the plain state of the case.

Mary said no more, but for a couple of days went about her work in a very half-hearted and indifferent fashion—pale of face, pink of eye and nose. At length, seeing her tears fall like rain into her wash-tub one morning, I weakly inquired into the cause of her grief.

'I miss my mother's little Uthel trumenjuous!' she said.

It has been told of me that I am always to be conquered by the sound of a snuffle—by the sight of a falling tear. I certainly succumbed on this occasion, leaving the girl triumphant, with permission to sit with the baby when her work was done, so long as she did not infringe nurse's rules.

When Guy came down from nursery regions that afternoon we learnt of fearful doings there. Over the unconscious body of the infant it seemed that the nurse and the 'general' had actually fought. Nurse had thrown the baby's bottle at Mary; Mary had slapped nurse's face. Nurse had thereupon left the 'general' master of the field and had gone to pack up her boxes; and almost immediately here she was at the door, very injured and angry, and insisting on leaving the Rectory at that very instant.

After that no reproaches had the effect of damping Mary's ardour. In the flush of victory she did the work of two people, and did it in such a thorough fashion as no two people at the Rectory had ever done it before. She arose before daybreak, that, her own legitimate labours being over, the coveted privilege of washing, dressing, and nursing the infant till it slept again might be hers. Hour after hour of nights when the weakly child was fretful she carried it about, untired, in her arms. In such fashion her 'month's notice' crept away, and the day came on which she must leave us. We talked among ourselves of how she would bring herself to part from her precious charge.

'Let her stay,' pleaded the Rector, always tempted to do the easy thing, always yielding to pressure. I had to remind him that Mary in many things had behaved badly; that while she remained I could not uphold authority; that in the end it would be bad for Margaret. Upon which representations he turned his back, as his habit is in all controversy, and went out of the room. I had once or twice attempted a word with Mary herself on the subject of her approaching departure. She heard me in stolid silence as far as her tongue was concerned, but it must be confessed she made the plates and dishes, the kitchen doors, and the tinware to speak.

Margaret, grown a year old now, was unusually fretful on the eventful day which was to see the last of the 'general.' It is a humiliating fact that in spite of all my love and devoted care, my anxious desire to please, the child would always turn from my blandishments to the rough arms, the hard bosom of Mary—a curious freak of preference a little difficult to bear.

She was sitting on my lap, resisting all my efforts to amuse her, when Mary, announced by her habitual attack on the door, appeared. The 'general' was attired in the green merino, grown shorter now, the black hat and white feather which on Sunday afternoons, in the Rectory servants' pew, were such an offence in

my eyes, but which Mary had stoutly refused to relinquish. She was equipped for her journey, down to her white cotton gloves and her horn-handled umbrella.

So she stood for a minute silent in the doorway, and in her eyes was a great scorn of my ineffectual efforts to comfort the fractious child—a great longing was in them too.

In my own eyes, somewhat to my astonishment, the tears rose. The girl had been a comfort in many ways, although so impossible in others. To be going away from Dulditch, to be leaving for ever little Margaret, was not that a fate to awake compassion in the hardest heart?

‘You have been a good girl, Mary,’ I said. ‘We shall be glad to hear that you are doing well. We shall not forget you.’

On Mary’s part ungracious silence; on that of little Margaret loud cries, and a passionate struggle to get out of my arms and to escape to Mary.

‘Put ‘er down and let ‘er crape,’ Mary cried with a kind of contemptuous authority. ‘Yew be a hurtin’ on ‘er like that.’

‘You’ll have your mother’s little Ethel, you know,’ I reminded her, determined not to show offence; while Margaret being put upon the floor had hushed her crying and was putting much energy and enthusiasm into the exercise of ‘craping.’ I had hold of her dress, but she had bolted under the table, and, finding it inconvenient to follow, I, perforce, let her go. Running round to catch the child as she emerged, I found myself too late. With a crow of delight the little thing had made for Mary, and clutched the green merino dress.

Triumphantly Mary flung down her umbrella and clawed the baby to her heart.

‘I ha’ got ‘er,’ she cried, with a defiant look at me. She held the child tightly with one arm and pulled off her hat and feather. ‘I baint a goin’ to lave her, nayther,’ she declared, glaring at me. ‘Nothin’ ont make me lave her; and so I tell yer.’

And, although this was by no means the only effort made to get rid of our Mary, she never did leave us.

‘Time little Margaret live I’m agoin’ to stop along of her,’ she always said. ‘When she be gone I’ll go if yer like.’

But although Margaret has been gone this many a year, Mary is with us still.

She is a hard-featured, middle-aged woman now, speaking always of herself as a ‘gal’ still. She has contrived to save

money in our service, the green merino having had few successors, and Mary being always 'wunnerful keerful' over her things. When savings are spoken of suitors will appear, and more than once the household has been disturbed to its foundations by the announcement that its prop and mainstay was about to be wrenched from it—that our Mary was going to be married.

Experience of the worth of such intimations enables us now to treat the news with outward respect, but without any undue disturbance of equanimity.

'I ha' got another young man. I be goin' to git married, come Michaelmas,' is a sentence with which we are now pretty familiar.

Mary's courting exercises run about the same course, and we can watch the proceedings without any too lively an interest, knowing well what will be the end. They generally begin, as in the case of Teddy Pyman, a young man of blameless character, but of rather weak intellect, over the chickens in the spring. Mary is clever in the rearing of fowls, and in the spring of the year a good deal of her time is spent on the 'drying-ground' where the hen-coops are. Teddy, who makes a short cut through the small enclosed meadow on his way home from work, sits on the gate beneath the April sky and, with an abstracted air, pulls off a twig from the thorn-hedge beside him, or a gummy chestnut bud from the great tree above his head, flings it at Mary's dress as she busies herself about the chickens. Mary, muttering to herself, with her eyes dropped to the little yellow chicks she has gathered in her apron, is as unresponsive as a stone wall. Having presently finished with the chickens, and without so much as a glance in Teddy's direction, Mary twitches some clothes off the linen line, stoops to pick up a large turnip which has fallen from a passing tumbril, and walks towards the house. The young man has slipped from the gate, and slouching behind her, still endeavours to obtain her attention by missiles—pebbles now, or dry lumps of earth—despatched in her direction, and which hit her once and again on cheek or shoulder, or in the small of her back.

Having reached the safe shelter of the kitchen door, Mary turns, and without the slightest warning, responds to the above delicate attentions by flinging the turnip she carries straight in her admirer's face. The turnip is so large and she despatches it with so hearty a force that it looks like taking Teddy's head off. He is not a quick lad, but he manages to duck the ugly head in

time to save it, and he greets the loud slamming of the door as Mary retreats with a yell of laughter.

When the next evening comes he is on the gate again; and the next, and the next.

Presently Mary goes out to shut up her chickens for the night without her cap. The cap is an immense improvement to Mary's appearance, but she does not recognise the fact, and always doffs it when admirers are about. Soon there comes an evening when, the grass of the drying-ground being slippery from the late rain, Mary tumbles over a refractory chicken which refuses to be tucked under its mother's wing, and measures her length upon the ground. Whereat the gallant gentleman upon the gate roars with an uncouth laughter.

'Don't set a goldering theer,' Mary says, with a stiff smile upon her own long lip and a sidelong glance from beneath her white lashes. 'Come and ketch it yerself, yer chump-hid!'

So encouraged Teddy slides slowly from the gate, secures the refractory chicken, while Mary wipes the effects of her fall from her afternoon frock; and a recognised stage in the courtship has been reached.

After this, although he makes no more effort to assist her than lies in the sticking out of a heavy foot to prevent the escape of one of the brood, or the lazy kicking towards her of the sacks with which she secures the coops from the night air, the young man always slouches at Mary's back instead of lounging on the gate, and he is reported to be 'helping Mary with the chickens.'

'Tha's a rare bad job he ha' got that theer cross in's eye, ain't it?' Mary inquires of me soon, by way of introducing the important subject. 'That young chap—yew know—Tedder, then, Tedder Pyment,' she explains, with the sidelong glance and the wriggle which portends the discussion of the tender passion, 'I'm a kapin' comp'ny 'long o' him—him and me's goin' to git married come Michaelmas.'

In Mary's preparations for marriage there is a peculiarity which I mention with diffidence, because of the uncharitableness of the world. I must only entreat the reader at this point not to give way to doubts which wrong her, but to hold our Mary to be, like the wife of Cæsar, above suspicion. Instead, then, of getting her *trousseau* ready, turning her thoughts to the making and laying-by of body-linen and dresses, as is the world-wide, time-honoured custom of intending brides, Mary devotes all her

thought and ingenuity to the formation of the *layette*. In her bedroom she has a box devoted to her stock of baby-linen. In all her spare moments after the appearance of a lover she is to be seen busily cutting out and sewing little garments which her clumsy fingers most cleverly fashion and adorn. She mutters to herself over her needle with a very happy look.

‘Ef so be as ‘tis a gal—and I want it to be a gal—‘tis to be called Marg’ret,’ she says, displaying some of the handiwork. ‘Marg’ret and me used ter talk over how I were to have a little gal o’ my own and that were to be called arter her.’

It is useless to remonstrate with her on the premature nature of her work.

‘Oh, ah! Some people is allust a puttin’ orf,’ she says with contempt.

The chance that her union might not be blessed with children has been pointed out to her.

‘There bain’t no sense i’ getting married unless ye’re to have child’en. I don’t hold wi’ no such a foolishness as that come tu, nayther,’ she says.

So for a little she stitches busily away, and then, as in the case of Tedder, the chickens being reared and Michaelmas near, a change comes over the young dream of love which periodically visits our Mary. The baby-linen is locked away in the box. Tedder may wait in vain, slouching about the kitchen door, lounging against the drying-ground gate. She takes the precaution to hang out her linen and to gather it in at an hour when the young man’s occupation detains him at a safe distance. She has no quarrel with him, enters into no argument on the subject, listens to no lover’s appeal. He may linger in the autumn air amid the flapping, wet sheets, may even, urged by the desperation of his case to show the reality of his love, re-erect her linen props for her, blown down in last night’s gale; or, waylaying her in an unwary moment, attempt to carry her basket of wet linen.

Without any compunction for the false hopes she has raised and the havoc she has wrought in his affections, she elbows him out of her way, tells him she has no longer time to play the fool, and gives him various salutary but blunt pieces of advice as to his future conduct.

Tedder is convinced at last that his luck is to be no better than that of his predecessor; that his chances, for that year, at any rate, are over. If he stay in the same mind till the chickens come again—no newer admirer being beforehand with him on the

drying-ground—he can resume his rôle for the season. At the end of it he will meet with the same fate.

Poor Mary! That visionary baby of hers, which was to bear the beloved name, short-coated long ago, should be old enough by now to wear the green merino in which her mother came to Dulditch. Each time that the swain is sent about his business and Mary turns to the sober duties of her life again, she presents the greater part of those shirts and gowns and flannel head-pieces to some expectant mother in the village, whose hopes are more certainly fulfilled than Mary's. But in the spring-time, when the world that was dead with all its hopes and promises lives again, she is bound to set to work to fill her box once more.

While she lives, I suppose, the maternal instinct will cry out in Mary. She is so constructed that the blandishments of the rustic lover beguile her only partially and for a little while; she wearies of the 'fulgeries' of the mate apportioned her; but the attractiveness of that baby head which should lie against her breast, of the helpless feet that should dance in her lap, of the clinging hands in her own, will fascinate her imagination till her death-bed.

It is said in the village that Mary rules the Rectory. At the Rectory it is known that she does not rule with a gentle hand. There is an air of contemptuousness in her management of us which is a little hard to bear. We cannot always do what we will with our own; there are certain days on which we dare not invite visitors to our house; there are one or two parishioners to whom we have to show attention *sub rosâ*, Mary not approving of their persons or characters or ways of 'goin' on'; there are others who are pushed forward for soup and brandy and 'pieces' on all occasions. There was one summer-time, she being for some reason unusually crusty ('short-waisted' she calls this state of mind herself), when she would not sanction our giving the annual school treat. We dared not undertake it without her approval.

She is always specially 'difficult' when the church bells ring; can barely tolerate their tolling for church, and is rendered furious by the practice for Christmas, the New Year, and other festivals. She has, indeed, a curious terror of music. It is not often now that there are any to make music at the Rectory, but on those occasions when Guy runs down, and old friends of his look in upon us; when the piano is opened again, and again the 'plaintive numbers flow For old unhappy, far-off things, And battles long

ago'—then Mary takes refuge in the underground cellar and muffles her head in a shawl.

It may be that the 'melancholy madness' is trying to Mary's nerve; it may be that she is unusually susceptible of the charm of music; she is, perhaps, dimly conscious that if she ceased to withstand its sway its power over her might become irresistible; perhaps the 'measured malice' awakes within her longings which tear her breast with unspeakable pain. Mary does not plead any of these excuses. She calls music a 'terrific n'ise,' and says it gives her a 'sinkin' in 'er in'ards.'

She might be induced to go to the church oftener but for the music, she thinks, but she speaks with no certainty on the point. Familiarity, I fear, has accomplished its usual office, and bred contempt in the Rectory servant of the forms of that religion which is the Rectory 'consarn,' as she puts it. She is unable to separate the master in the pulpit, with his learning, his ascendancy, his voice of authority, from the master of the home, who has to be scolded for forgetting to put a comforter round his neck; whose study fire has to be lit six times a day because his memory is not to be trusted to remind him to put on the coals; who is so wickedly unpunctual about meals.

'I don't want him a-setting up ter tache me,' Mary says with frank disdain; 'ef so be as ivver I want ter pray, I take it I kin pray without such as him.'

So, instead of going to church, Mary sits over the kitchen fire on the Sabbath with her Bible in her lap. It is in fact a monster Bible, being one which she bought at the door of a travelling agent, expending all her earnings upon it—long ago, when Margaret was a baby.

There never was a Sunday afternoon after the acquisition of this treasure which Mary and Margaret did not spend over its vilely illuminated sheets. The tiny fingers could point out Noah on his knees before his fire of sticks, the rainbow over his head, Abraham with the abnormal muscular developments, the sacrificial knife raised above his son, long before her baby tongue could speak their names. On the very last Sunday afternoon of the child's life she and Mary went through the pages with as much interest as if they had never seen them before.

On that day, coming home from church, I entered the Rectory by the kitchen door. The kitchen had that inexplicable, indescribable Sabbath air which places have on the hallowed day, which Nature herself always wears. On the much-scrubbed deal table

was a great brown gotch full of lilac, was the Bible, with Margaret, her head propped on her hand, leaning over it; one of Mary's hard red hands rested on the book waiting to turn the leaves. (She always honours the Sabbath day by wearing in the afternoons a brass watch chain which one of her lovers gave her.) I remember that Margaret's brown hair, turned to bronze and gold in places by the kiss of the afternoon sun, fell upon the picture of the Flood.

It is partly the possession of that enormous Bible which gives Mary such a feeling of superiority to the Rector. Once in a moment of expansion, anxious to share the blessings that were hers, she carried the book, wrapped in the cloth which always enveloped it, into the dining-room and laid it proudly down before her master's chair.

'The gays are wonnerful instructin' ' she said, her eyes on her treasure, but modestly withdrawn from its neighbourhood. 'There's angels in ut, and Balum's dicky a crunchin' of his master's fut.'

The Rector, who does not care to tackle Mary herself, was very severe when her back was turned on the sin of vulgarising Holy Writ by such abominable caricatures. As he turned from one illustration to another he grew reproachful as well as severe. Surely, he said, we who for so many years had enjoyed the inestimable privilege of sheltering this good and faithful servant beneath our roof should have done something to correct her taste, to elevate her understanding. She had given us her best, and we—what had we done in return? The duties we felt called upon to perform towards our inferiors were only gross, material ones. If we had fed sumptuously, knowing that one among us was perishing for want of food, we should be called culpable, and the world would cry out on us. But here was one, starved of all culture, associating with us who boasted of our refinement, yet a savage in matters of taste. 'Shame! Shame!' said the Rector, having turned his back on the book, and mildly lecturing his son and me as he paced the room.

And then Guy, who happened to be at home on that occasion, and who had lounged up to inspect the cause of so much eloquence, gave a shout of laughter and called on his father to admire with him the representation of Lot's wife.

And while the Rector, his homily forgotten, an unwilling smile on his lips, stood there with a hand upon Guy's shoulder, I took heart to tell him how, for all her little life, Margaret had

loved the blue and red and yellow daubs ; and I told him, too, of that picture, always present to my mind, of the child on that last Sunday afternoon with her rippled hair falling upon the picture of the Flood.

After that the Rector sat down by Guy's side and silently and in reverence looked at the dreadful plates, and said no other word of condemnation. And presently, when the end was reached, he arose and himself carried back the book into the kitchen. Then, in that polite and deferential manner he always uses for Mary, he thanked her for her kindness in lending the book and for all her kindness.

'I don't want ter fluster myself to go to church now I ha' got that, do I now ?' Mary calls after him, gratified and triumphant, as he departs. The Rector hastens his steps a little ; he always shirks an argument with Mary.

'So long as I ha' got 'em all theer, and kin see th' devil a temptin' of Ave, and th' 'arth a-openin' ter swaller Abiram, I bain't a-goin' ter trouble no fudder about 'em,' Mary mutters to herself, turning back to her book.

MARY E. MANN.

An Etiquette Book of the Seventeenth Century.

OUTSIDE the world of the stage and platform, infant prodigies have ceased to flourish, but in the reigns of 'Eliza and our James,' and of both the Martyr and the younger Charles the forcing-house view of education obtained, and upper-class England was a nest of precocious children. Almost as soon as a 'littell Sonne' could go or speak, he was initiated into 'rudiments' and had to apply his 'intellectuals' sedulously to syntax. It seemed no out-of-the-way thing for a callow boy (Kenelm Digby) to accompany a political mission abroad and, on returning, become—at the age of fifteen—a gentleman commoner of 'Gloucester Hall.' In like manner, the first Lady Falkland was married at fifteen, and her daughter at thirteen. Individually, as well as nationally, the seventeenth century was a period of eager developments and hasty harvesting, when maturity was attained, or assumed to be attained, very much earlier than at present. Judging by modern analogies, it would be difficult to imagine that only thirty years had brought Sir Thomas Browne the philosophic mind of *Religio Medici*, while the *bourgeois* pursiness of Pepys's tone of thought would suggest the diarist being nothing under fifty, though, as everyone knows, he was but thirty-seven when his deathless contribution to the human comedy was complete.

Of all the *early men* the seventeenth century reared—for who would call such rareripes children?—none outvied little Francis Hawkins at the sort of pathetic achievement in which the serious father and heavy uncle of the period grotesquely gloried. Born in 1628, this babe, before he was eight years old, rendered his renowned *Youth's Behaviour* from the French of 'grave persons.' Roughly describable as a seventeenth century 'Don't,' *Youth's Behaviour, or Decency in Conversation amongst Men* is probably

unsurpassed as an epitome of contemporary etiquette. In its own time it was held in great esteem, reaching an eleventh 'addition' in 1672. To almost every new impression there was added by various hands fresh matter more or less germane to the primary theme—at one time, further hints on 'Arraying the Body,' or on the 'titling of Persons,' at another, 'a Discourse upon some Innovations of Habits and Dressings,' at another, a glossary 'of those words that be used in naming of any Art or Science,' and so forth. In 1652, 'a Gentleman of Lincoln's Inn' paid the book the compliment of turning it into Latin. Finally, one Robert Codrington, who had been a rank parliamenteer (and was still a shocking bore), appended a second volume 'for the instructing of the younger sort of Maids and Borders at Schools.'

We naturally pause to contemplate the original putter-forth of *Youth's Behaviour*, the small boy, 'at whose Stile' his bookseller begs the reader to 'connive,' on the plea of its being 'wrought by an uncouth and rough File, of one in green years.' Poor 'ingeniose Sparke'! Did his green years catch so much as a glimpse of the bliss of childhood, irresponsibility? Was he ever once crimson with frolic or unintelligible with laughter? All internal evidence points the other way. We see an anaemic little person seating himself sedate and towardly at his desk to indite

Precept 5. 'Sing not within thy mouth, humming to thyself, unless thou be alone; in such sort as thou canst not be heard by others. Strike not up a Drum with thy fingers or thy feet'

and afterwards this

'When thou blowest at thy Nose take heed thou blow not as children do . . .' (Of the further detailed instructions in this branch it is sufficient to say that they throw a lurid light on seventeenth century pronenesses.)

With an ascetic contravention of the instincts of a real child the little schoolmaster Francis presently exhorts :

'Eat not in the streets, principally in the Town, beest thou alone, nor in company; nor in the house out of season, and in the presence of strangers.'

Maxims, however comic, come so tragically from lips 'but seven years old,' that it is comforting to know that Francis Hawkins managed to grow up. Considering *Youth's Behaviour* he lived, indeed, to a fair age.

But what a *pastiche* the boy's entire manual is of the little ways and mannerisms of our politer ancestors! Here we may follow them both to board and bed, and watch their goings-out and

their comings-in, with all the minute perplexities of ethic and punctilio therefrom depending.

Though hygiene was not unconsidered among them, it was with 'anothergess' consideration from ours. The following should provoke a Board School infant's supercilious smile: 'Let not thy chamber nor thy table where thou studiest be unhandsome, especially in the sight of another, and if so be that thou hast one to make thy bed, leave it not uncovered when thou goest out thence.' An assertion that occurs in Codrington's sequel should partially allay Johnny Jones's contempt for the seventeenth century, though one notes that it is cautiously introduced as a 'remarkable observation,' to wit, 'The Nurse and the Neoterick may pretend what they please, but it much discourageth and dejecteth the sick Person not to often change his Linnen.' Let us congratulate ourselves that later 'Neotericks' have all come round to the above 'remarkable' opinion! But beyond a warning against drinking when hot the original *Youth's Behaviour* leaves its reader's sanitation pretty much in his own hands, and in the hands of the 'Galenists,' whose business it was. The book certainly goes so far as to lay down that 'it is a point of wholsomeness to wash one's hands and face as soon as one is up, and' (as it somewhat grudgingly adds), 'to comb one's head in time and season, yet not too curiously.' But seldom in those days was it anybody's turn to be washed all over. Complete immersion was judged a ticklish proceeding, and those who committed themselves even partially to the ordeal did so at their peril—as we may learn from the autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton (*née* Wandesford) of East Newton, Yorks. On a monumental occasion this ill-advised lady washed her feet, 'which my mother did beleieve was the cause of that dangerous fitt the next day.'

For the writer of these pages, by the bye, no other seventeenth century book would supply the place of the autobiography just referred to. It gives as complete an impression of one woman's ways and notions as Marie Bashkirtseff's confidences give of another's. Only in Mrs. Thornton's case what parlous though estimable twaddle! No Spanish Marriage, no Long Parliament interests or disturbs her. All is 'abject domesticity' unalloyed; yet, at our idealising distance, the 'document' seems intensely human in its quaint simplicity and its lovable similarity in unlikeness to the experiences of the great wedge of the female middle class of our own time.

Problems of hatting and un-hatting seem to have bristled

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round our ancestors, and when not to cover at the first request, and when, finally, 'to leave damnable faces and begin,' were difficulties that clearly cried for an authoritative settlement. It must have been a relief to know once for all from *Youth's Behaviour* the correct distance to leave between one's interlocutor and oneself—'not further than a span or thereabout.' Similarly, many of the Francis Hawkins admonishments turn on vexed questions connected with salutation by the way and with walking generally. If walking singly, 'Go not like a Ninny nor playing the Peacock. Make not any sign of admiration, as if thou thoughtest of some great business. Tread not purposely on the pebble stones, *for it is the act of a fool.*' An excellent reason, though seventy years later one was to be born at Lichfield, 'nae fule,' yet very apt to 'tread purposely on the pebble stones,' counting *his steps with a deep earnestness!* The seventeenth century etiquette book is too sensible to be a stickler for etiquette. Thus it charges, in the event of a ramble with a friend, 'Amuse not on point of precedence, and having not the place which belongeth to thee, let it not trouble thee, but go on roundly.' The observances in walking three abreast are naturally somewhat complicated. 'He in the middest walking with equals or as it were equals' (there is virtue in the distinction!) 'ought to turn himself, now to the right, then to the left hand. Finally, they who are on the side, ought always to turn themselves towards him who is the mid'st, neither before him nor behind him.' Train Band drill must have proved invaluable in bringing these last manœuvres to a successful issue.

The very fact of elaborate directions being printed, presumably for Londoners among the rest, as to how to bear themselves three in a row, points to other times as well as other manners, and calls up a vision of leisurely hours, large, void places, and a something village-like and unpreoccupied in the ways of the metropolis. In like manner, what concept, outside kings' palaces, has modern life to match this spacious phrase, '*Walking up and down an house with one only, be not' etc.?*

An interesting note on the contemporary way of speech is afforded by the following: 'To persons of lesser rank, one saith, *You*, without thou-ing anybody, be it not some little child, and that thou wert much more aged, and that the custome itself amongst the meer courteous and better bred, were to speak in such manner. What concerneth familiar friends, amongst them the custome doth comport in certain places, that they (*Thou*) one another more freely, in other places one's more reserved.' Did

little Francis *tutoyer* his readers, one might inquire, on the ground of being 'much more aged' than they? His pronouncement would be more interesting still were it more definite, for a hedging timidity characterises our boy. Witness this amusing instance: 'Suck no bones, at least in such wise that one may hear it; take them not with two hands, but with one solely and properly. Gnaw them not, nor tear the flesh with thy teeth; but make use of thy knife, holding them with one hand, or rather with two fingers, as nigh as thou canst. Knock no bones upon thy trencher to get out the marrow of them, but get out the marrow with a knife; to speak better, it is the conseil of the most wise, that it is not fit to handle bones, and much less to mouth them.' The 'conseil of the most wise' is evidently quoted as an ideal 'conseil,' scarcely yet within the sphere of practical politeness.

For all his diffidence the child indulges in some shrewd hits at pragmatical persons and bores, and that seventeenth century England was rich in both varieties any random sheaf of its myriad pamphlets goes far to demonstrate. We might almost imagine that the solemn foolishness of some selected individual was being chevied in the following: 'Be not tedious in speech; principally when the thing is of small importance, or when thou perceivest that the company doth not well like of it. Farce not thy language with Sentences. Be not a year in the beginning of a discourse.' So much for bores. As for prigs and superior persons here is something equally to fit their turn: 'Hearing the Preacher, wriggle not thyself, as seeming unable to contain thyself within thy skin, making shew thyself to be the knowing and sufficient person, to the misprice of others.' And again: 'Do not undertake to teach thy equal in the Art himself professeth.' This is trenchant and somehow reminds a modern reader of that inimitable moment in Stevenson's *Wrong Box* when the bankers are able to identify Uncle Joseph Finsbury because he explains to them the principles of banking.

Etiquette books of every age expand with dinner and become rampant over the ritual of the table. No less *Youth's Behaviour*, which, in its sketch of company manners as they should be, gives us, by implication, rather a painful insight into company manners as they were. The dining Englishman of the period was extremely prone, apparently, to eat as Dr. Johnson ate—strenuously, hotly, with avidity. This 'becometh not,' and must gently be reformed. 'One ought sometimes to look off the meat, yet without wishly looking on the meat which is before others.' Food seems to have

been served very inconveniently 'for despatch' and with a paucity of plates, hence such embarrassments as the following counsel provides against: 'One ought not to cast under the Table bones, parings, wine, or such like things, notwithstanding if one be constrained to spit something which was hard to chew, or which causeth irksomeness, then may one throw it dexterously forth upon the ground. If it be a liquid thing, one may more freely spit it on the ground, turning oneself if it be possible somewhat aside.' How did the newly manufactured English Beauvais carpets fare on these occasions?

Much, besides the disposal of bones, is recommended to be done 'dexterously,' and especially in table-talk must tact be observed. Thus, all 'inopportune dolefull' topics are to be waived, topics, that is, such as 'wounds, sculs, or death.' 'If others speak in that kind, change the discourse dexterously.'

Youth's Behaviour, in its observations 'of Parol Communication,' lays particular stress on its being (to use Landor's phrase) without offence to God or the ladies. The author shared Isaak Walton's opinion that 'a companion that feasts the company with wit and mirth, and leaves out the sin which is usually mixed with them, he is the man.'

Sometimes it gives our latter-day egoism quite a 'turn' to find how abundantly the benignant minutiae of civilisation were discerned so long before we were thought of. It may be that the modernness of the ancients is the most beneficial, as it is the most chastening, notion we gain from history. What can be more delicately civilised, for instance, than this: 'When another speaketh, take heed that through thee he be not neglected by his auditors;' or again, 'Avoid too much gravity in things familiar and ordinary'? All the social grace of Lovelace should follow on the adoption of such Manners for Men.

Youth's Behaviour frequently impresses that 'a man wel bred ought not to vaunt himself . . . let him not always take upon him the Discourse.' Gravid rules, but rules do not reach exceptional characters, and readers of Howell's Letters may, in passing, recollect how egregiously Ben Jonson (much like his great namesake to come) sinned in both these particulars. Yet Ben could not, certainly, be accounted a man of no good breeding, as Clarendon accounted Sir John Colepepper on the score that he had 'never sacrificed to the Muses, or conversed in any polite company'! Ben Jonson was a veteran when he gave the supper at which 'he engrossed all the discourse and vapoured extremely of himself,'

and though one of the guests buzzed in Howell's ear, 'an ill-favoured solecism in good manners!' Howell himself excused 'B.'s self-commendation as an 'infirmity . . . now that time hath snowed upon his pericranium.'

In laying down Hawkins's *Youth's Behaviour* to take up Codrington's feminine supplement (1st ed. 1664) we make a poor exchange, except in so far as the latter digs a mine into the occupations and ideas 'sortable' to young gentlewomen of the Caroline period. The description given of their various pursuits may strike us as sketchy and slight, but we must remember that it is a mere man who writes. How can a he-thing treat 'True-Stitch, Queen-Stitch, Rock-work, Frost-work, and Mosse-work' with adequate amplitude? On the other hand, all of the passed master in Puritanism is in the following: 'To entertain young Gentlewomen in their hours of Recreation we shall commend unto them *God's Revenge against Murther* and *Artemidorus his Interpretation of Dreams*.' Of these two works it is not difficult to guess which would be more 'asked for' among the young maids themselves. With far greater sympathy and unction Robert Codrington enters into their culinary employments, and his menus are both 'extensive and peculiar.' Personally, he appears far from insensible to the charms of 'caviere' and anchovies, but for the 'Borders at Schools' own consumption he prescribes a less alluring fare. 'The best Refection that young Gentlewomen can take in the Morning is the *Panada*,' thinks this dietist, and he urges various arguments of a recondite and horribly physiological description against Fat Meat. Yet is he so far from insinuating carnivorous tastes in young Gentlewomen that he handsomely declares them 'for the most part not subject to the least Excess, unless it be of the Sugar-plum or the Macaroon' (*Ah, Nora, Nora Helmer!*), 'and for this,' he adds, 'they are too often punished by the dis-complexion and pain of their teeth.'

Has it, by the way, been sufficiently remarked how large a part 'a raging tooth' plays in the domestic communications of the seventeenth century? But woe was unto them that had any manner of ailment in those days of preposterous physic. Certain complaints seem always in evidence, 'imposthumes,' for instance, and 'calentures,' and 'cruditys.' The frequency of the last-named disorder, however, causes readers of Hawkins's 'Carriage at the Table' small surprise, considering that 'cruditys' stood for indigestion—the 'imperfect Concoction of Food'—see Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part I. sect. i. Hereupon Robert Codrington some-

what repulsively remarks concerning Black Pepper that it 'cutteth tuff and gross Flegm and is good against Cruditys.'

In most of these discursive old books the table of contents is the drollest part. Readers of *Excursions in Libraria*, by Mr. G. H. Powell, may recall a 'prize entry' he cites from a copious but rambling index to a valuable history of the sixteenth century. After fruitless search for an important event under every letter imagination could suggest it was at last discovered among the Q.s, thus: '*Quæ uno die diversis locis acciderunt.*' Nothing to rival this can be culled from Codrington's *Youth's Behaviour*, yet are its headings tolerably unbusinesslike, as a selection from them will show :

'Of the Ordering and Education of young Ladies from the seventh year unto the twelfth, and so, to the sixteenth.

'Of Beauty.

'Of Wisdom requisite to them.

'Of Man.

'Of the Vanity of some young Gentlewomen.

'Of their Knowledge in Spicery.

'Of Dayries, and the making of Butter and Cheese, belonging to Country-Gentlewomen, and not improper to be known by those of the City.

'Of New Fashions.

'Of the Advantages of an honest Parentage.

'Of Women in general.'

The chapter on 'New Fashions' is decidedly amusing, and Prynne himself might have dictated the bold assertion that 'black Patches are an abomination in the sight of the Lord,' with its ingenious rider which states that when 'God and Satan shall divide their flock (it will be as with *Laban and Jacob*), the spotted and ring-streaked will fall to the Devil's share.' This, however, is an inspiration of one of the miscellaneous contributors to *Youth's Behaviour*, not of Codrington himself. But he entirely coincides with the denunciation and, not to be behindhand, composes some delicious model letters on the crime of 'pouncing' the face and laying on 'a little quickning Complexion.' The 'Mounseur *A-la-mode*' who 'dreggs' his hair with powder is grimly described as 'a Meal-man.' The only wood-cuts in the book are two odd pictures—to represent 'Virtue,' a plain female in a hood and collar; to represent 'Vice,' a *décolletée* female wearing curls and patches, not handsome, though presumably 'stylish.' Creditable sentiment surpasses grammar in the following letter from one girl to another :

'To a Cousin advising about Bravery.—I thank you for your Papers and trouble of that spruce Inventory you sent me. I fault in most of these modes nor their levity but their brevity also, especially such as are far fetcht for a fortnight's wearing and leaves not a good Huswife a relique worth the keeping.'

This would have gladdened the heart of paterfamilias who besought the fashion editor to arrange that next spring's mode in bonnets should be last spring's done up.

When Robert Codrington treats of 'Women in general' he is comparatively disappointing. Perhaps he was not a married man, or, if married, too discreet to draw upon his private experiences. That husbands and wives were pretty much then what they are now, let a last digression illustrate. It is taken from the recently edited letters of Endymion Porter, who, on some 'emergent' occasion, writes to his wife as follows :

'I will ever endeavour to let you see that I esteem you above all earthly things, but still I shall wish that you would know I must govern you and not you me.'

A dignified and becoming assertion, as every husband will agree. Then a week passes, and once more Mrs. Porter's lord and master takes up his pen :

'My dear Olive,—I received the answer of my letter and perceive by it that I must put off my hat first. Your will be done, sweetheart, for otherwise we shall have but little quiet.'

As it was in the beginning——!

F. M. PARSONS.

At the Sign of the Ship.

FEW people have much more interest than authors in the peace of the world. People are not too fond of reading books at any season—‘they have no time’—but in war time they never look beyond the newspapers. Even for them war cannot be advantageous, on account of the extra expenses. It is odd, therefore, that so many newspapers hound on opposed nations, like so many blackguard boys watching a street quarrel. If nations must fight, let them fight like gentlemen, not like fish-fags or bar-room loafers. As the *Daily News* well remarked, John Bull may put his foot down, but why should he put his tongue out? *Yah!* is the war-cry of ‘Arry, and to ‘Arry it should be left.

* * *

Let us turn to more peaceful thoughts, this not being a political serial. M. Paul Gourmand (who dates his dedication from Manchester) has published a drama in verse, *William Wallace*, not intended for the theatre. It is a compliment from a French gentleman to the Auld Alliance. Among the *dramatis personæ* is ‘Bob, of the Clan Macgregor,’ and ‘Macdonald, of the Clan Campbell.’ We do not know anything very precise about these clans in Wallace’s day, but ‘Hob,’ not ‘Bob,’ seems to have been short for Robert, as Edward I. (in the temper which I have deprecated) called Robert Bruce ‘King Hob,’ not ‘King Bob.’ A member of Clan Campbell could *hardly* be named ‘Macdonald.’ The two clans were never on friendly terms, and are not now, as you may read in the ‘History of Clan Donald,’ by two discreet and learned ministers of the name. How they do dislike Clan Diarmid! The Speaker of the House of Commons is also one of the characters.

* * *

The play opens on the Abbey Craig of Stirling; Highlanders stand about, with dirk and claymore. It is night, but Loch Lomond is visible. The Highlanders converse. To them enter

Lady Mildred de Mar, in clan tartan, with a white scarf, her hair down. She expresses her affection for Wallace, and seeks counsel from the stars. A crowd rushes in, and MacLean, rather prematurely, announces that Scotland is free! and the Celtic soul is happy. The Earl of Mar approaches, leaning on the arm of Lady Elsa; he wears the philibeg. He is informed that Stirling, held by the odious English, has fallen. The Campbell pipes are heard: *The Campbells are Coming!* Lady Mildred announces the crown for Wallace (who, of course, was fighting for King John, over the water). All the clans enter, Wallace at their head. A lot of them were on the English side, but no matter. The two young ladies congratulate the hero. One surmises that he likes Elsa best. Wallace is hailed as Guardian. Macgregor shows a nasty, envious temper. Macfarlane challenges him to claymores. The clans swagger off. The clans have 'all the fat.' Of course it was the Lowland spears that circled Wallace. Lady Mildred (in a soliloquy) again claims the crown for Sir William. Enter Macgregor, who declares his passion for Lady Mildred. She scorns him. The scoundrel draws his dirk, but relents so far, yet announces that Wallace prefers Lady Elsa, only sixteen.

'I will ruin him,' cries Mac.

'I will crown him,' says the lady.

Curtain.

ACT II. *Westminster Hall.*

Lady Mildred enters as a male envoy from Wallace. She wears the Rob Roy tartan. She bears a document alleging that Wallace wants the crown, and will do homage for it to Edward. He accepts. Joy of Lady Mildred.

Curtain.

ACT III. *Falkirk Moor.*

Macgregor alone. He reflects that he is of the royal blood of Alpine, and vows vengeance on Wallace. The unsuspecting Wallace intrusts the cavalry to Mac. Wallace is left alone. Enter Lady Mildred with Edward's offer of a feudal crown. He offers to dirk her. She confesses her passion. He is about to stab her. Enter Mac. Wallace sends him to put the lady in a convent. The pair scheme vengeance. Lady Mildred hides. Loving scene between Wallace and Lady Elsa. Enter clans ready for battle. They follow the pipes of the Campbells. Lady Mildred comes out and announces her vexation at the engagement of Wallace and Lady Elsa. She will betray him.

Curtain.

ACT IV. *Falkirk Moor.*

Wallace 'has had a damned good beating.' The dastardly fugitives rally round Mac. Wallace's friends are, however, ready to fight Macgregor's crowd. Old Mar induces Wallace to scuttle. Edward arrives: the pursuit of Wallace begins. Elsa and Lady Mildred. Lady M. glories in her perfidy, for Mac has induced Wallace's cavalry to bolt. 'You be damned!' says Elsa ('*Sois damnée!*'), and faints.

Curtain.

ACT V. *Westminster Hall.*

Condemnation of Wallace. Arrival of Elsa to ask for grace. Wallace *never* promised homage to Edward. That was a put-up thing by Lady Mildred. Macgregor is the real villain, not Sir William. Edward asks, very properly, for documentary evidence; for the block is ready, and somebody must have his head cut off for this. Lady Elsa says that her tears are the evidence. 'Bring the headsman!' says Edward, who has no belief in ladies' logic. Here the Court is quite with him. 'Murderer!' cries Elsa and faints. Wallace is led in, declares that he will never be forgotten, and is led off to execution:

Prince cruel, adieu,
Je t'attends dans quatre ans au tribunal de Dieu.'

Wallace has him there.

Curtain.

* * *

M. Gourmand, it will be remarked, explains why Edward, naturally clement, was so relentless to Wallace. He thought that Wallace had promised submission and homage, thanks to the unscrupulous conduct of Lady Mildred. He ought to have been more careful than to accept the very irregular document put in by a seeming gillie in the Macgregor tartan. Later, Edward insisted on evidence, which Lady Elsa could not supply. Hence the tragedy. Macgregor must have been a direct ancestor of that rogue James More. Unluckily, M. Gourmand does not tell us what became of Mac, and how vengeance found him out. He might have given the traitor's part to Sir Colin Menteith, but he could not bear to have to do with mere Lowlanders. His heart is in the Highlands, with Bob, and Macdonald, and the rest of the Campbells. As a matter of fact, Wallace was taken, I think, in the house of his 'leman' (*not* Lady Elsa), but stories differ.

* * *

Oh folklorists, my brethren, be not too credulous of old wives' fables. It was announced at a folklore meeting on the authority

of a story which A (who would not give his name) told B, who told C, who told D, that, in an Italian village, a victim was yearly slain ('died for Christ') in Passion week. Victim and slayer were selected, as in Mr. Stevenson's story, of the Suicide Club. Now, if this tale was true, it proved a strange religious aberration among the villagers. But the Italian local folklorists made inquiries. The village was a town of 20,000 people. No evidence for the pious murders could be discovered. This is what comes of giving facts on fourth hand evidence without dreaming of inquiring at the actual source. Now, as folklorists are apt to boggle at first hand signed evidence to anything 'psychical,' they ought to be the last people to report 'great swingeing' fibs at fourth hand. For, even if the story of the sacrifice had turned out to be true, it ought to have been critically examined before it was promulgated. If some folklorists want to run a tilt at religious belief, it is very necessary that they should not give the pale priest an advantage by recklessness of statement. 'Brookes is sharp,' and a writer in *The Month* for October seemed to have the best of the fray so far.

* * *

Lately I had occasion to re-read *Edwin Drood*, with Mr. Proctor's solution of the Mystery given in 'Watched by the Dead.' Mr. Proctor supposed that Jasper bungled the murder of Edwin and threw him into quicklime in a sepulchre, whence he was taken out alive by Durdles, to reappear disguised as Dutchery, and hunt Jasper down. 'Hunted Down' would stand as a name for many of Dickens's novels; Jonas, Uriah, Ralph Nickleby, and other miscreants are thus persecuted. Mr. Proctor, with great ingenuity and detective adroitness, made out a very good case for his theory. *But*, before writing the book, Dickens told Forster that Jasper committed the murder, and was detected by means of Drood's ring, undestroyed by the quicklime. Then why, on the cover of the book, do we see Edwin standing in the dark, revealed by the rays of a lantern in a man's hand? Mr. Proctor argues that Jasper learned that the ring was in Drood's possession, opened the sepulchre to take the jewel, and found Edwin there all alive. If this is not so, what does the picture mean, and if it was so, why did Dickens fable to Forster? Perhaps he changed his plot in the act of writing his romance. Mr. Proctor's analysis of Dickens's method of throwing dust in a reader's eyes is very clever, but is that method good business? 'It's pretty, but is it art?'

* * *

Lately Professor Brander Matthews was arguing that the art of fiction has become 'finer' in modern hands, and more 'conscientious.' That would be very well if the books were also more entertaining, but the reverse is the case, alas! Nobody can be finer and more conscientious than Miss Austen, long enough ago, and scarcely any one less so than Scott. But this was not from ignorance of fineness of method, nor from lack of trying. In the original prelude to *The Fortunes of Nigel*, Scott, for once, talked about his 'methods' as the moderns do. He knew all about 'fineness,' of course, and had sedulously toiled at it, with the result that he bored himself terribly, and knew that he would therefore bore his public. That kind of work 'did not set his genius,' so he indulged his genius, and quite right. It is notable that mere mechanical neatness and polish has rarely been of interest to great minds, while it is within the range of every dull craftsman. By all means let ordinary novel writers aim at what is within their scope—the weary conscientious creatures that they are—but do not let us find fault with men immeasurably their superiors because they wrote as their genius prompted them. Mechanical finish is the last and lowest and most 'machine-made' form of excellence. Compare an archaic Athenian coin with a dollar of the States, or a British half crown, and you see the gist of the controversy. We are reminded of Andrea del Sarto in Mr. Browning's poem, when he proposes to correct Raphael's drawing, but wisely thinks better of it. Any schoolboy can correct Scott's grammar, any educated reader is struck by his faults; still, there is the immortal master of romance, and here is the ordinary dull, conscientious, transitory novelist.

* * *

The 'Christian Scientists' are becoming a pest. If they let a patient alone, merely keeping him on a proper regimen, perhaps they would do very little harm. But when they let him alone to the extent of permitting him to eat, drink, smoke, and so on, as if he were in perfect health, the end has not long to be awaited. As to their cures, the mind can produce scores of maladies, and, properly acted on, the mind can doubtless heal the same. Qualified medical men who employ hypnotism appeal, I presume, to some mental faculty capable of affecting the body in an unusual way, in a way transcending the usual and familiar action of mind on body. Dr. Bramwell Milne's address to the medical gathering at Edinburgh contained remarkable examples of successes. But, of course, he is

a qualified practitioner, and not a lady with a quaint metaphysics of her own. It is a free country, and I presume people can dabble in any quackery they like. But some way may be found of getting at the persons who practise for money, the professionals of 'Christian Science.'

* * *

People who were amused last year by Miss Sybil Corbet's 'Animal Land,' will welcome this young author's new volume, 'Sybil's Garden of Pleasant Beasts' (Duckworth). It is illustrated by the lady described by the author as 'Sybil's Mummy.' The print is nice and big and black, while the artist has worked with a sympathetic hand. In this volume we meet the Lions who live in the Cistern garret. By a daring license of imagination the author assures us that the Daddy Lion was very lean 'before he ate Sybil's Mummy.' Afterwards, as the design shows, he was truly corpulent. The black and white bears are charming creatures, especially when they all go for a drive, very closely packed, in Sybil's donkey cart. Their behaviour to the Blackerry Binx is most courteous, though as the Binx eats most things beginning with a B, the bears had cause for anxiety. Binxes can see trains, but trains cannot see Binx. The Sirara stray Cat is justly described as 'a loveless animal,' whereas genial amiability rays from the frame and face of the Podd. The Shoodle is a creature which Sybil loves to have in her day nursery; he eats bedclothes. The Flying Pugs are exquisitively comic, while the timidity of the Kank is expressed in a masterly design. I have been permitted to read an unpublished 'Epiotic Poem' by this author. It is in octosyllabic verse, and ends,

Beetly, Beetly, sat on a stile
Watching for Fishes the whole of the while.

This is a pastime in which I have often imitated the Beetly. In accordance with the Principles of Savage Art, Miss Corbet deals almost entirely with animal life and behaviour. She is much to be commended for beginning her literary career, unlike other young geniuses, with prose. Her Epiotic poetry she does not desire to present to the public before it attains maturity of thought and finish of style. As Miss Corbet is only five years of age, her self-restraint is as remarkable as the exuberant fertility of her imagination.

* * *

A poet is cross with me because I decline, firmly, to read his MSS. and advise him as to the desirableness of taking to verse with all his young energy. Other poets may take a statistical view of their case. Let them consider the estimated population of the globe. How many of them have justified their conduct in being poets? At this hour is there one such being anywhere? Suppose, for the sake of argument, that there are six. How many millions to one is it against the success of the neophyte? But, if versify he must, let him send his work to all the editors. If they think his poems worth printing (and paying for), then let him make friends with certain young critics, who will blow his trumpet before him. But do not let him bother busy old men, who, by reason of their age, are no longer good judges. I have been a poet, perhaps, as good as my eager correspondents. But never, never did I send manuscripts to total strangers and ask for an opinion. Nobody worth a guinea a page ever does this kind of thing. No man can be, as I am daily invited to be, the amateur literary adviser of the human race. Publishers and editors exist to sift the chaff from the grain of letters, and any one can see that they are not too fastidious. If they won't accept prose or verse, clearly the maker had better take to some other honest trade or profession. If nothing else will stop the poet, let him ask himself if he reads other contemporary poets. They would form a paying public by themselves if they bought each other's works, but they know a great deal better than to waste their money on such wares. Who, then, do they expect to purchase their productions?

* * *

I have counted more than fifty new novels in the advertisements of the last number of the *Athenaeum*. Five or six are by authors of known reputation. Many of the others are by writers with names unknown to me, who yet appear as authors of this, that, and the other. They must have had some encouragement, or must be nobly indomitable. Where is their public? The novel-writing profession is the most over-crowded of all, and the critic's heart is broken by the swelling multitude of printed tales which are all so very like each other, and so very remote from what sensible people could read for pleasure.

* * *

I don't know why 'Tace' is Latin for a candle, therefore, in editing the 'Border' Waverley novels, I did not explain the thing.

The *Athenaeum* commented on this defect, and brought on its devoted head a crowd of explanations, none of them feasible. As far as I have seen, no explainer takes the obvious course of looking for the first appearance of the phrase in literature. I only remember it in *Ivanhoe*, but I think, vaguely, that Scott uses it in one of his letters. Better read people may know it earlier and elsewhere, and its meaning might be found if we could track it to its source. Where did Scott get the saying?

* * *

Q. has been waging war in the *Pall Mall Magazine* on the College of Preceptors (whoever they may be) and on their incredibly funny methods of teaching English literature. In fact, I do not think you can teach it. They tried, at school, in the lower classes or forms, and one used to read straight on at the book in hand, Cowper's poems for example, without paying the slightest attention to what the master was about, probably asking questions as to parsings, derivations, and so forth. In this way one found out what rare places public schools were in Cowper's time, and one got a little rather faint enjoyment from his *Sofa* and other pieces. In fact, one learned some English literature by the simple process of reading it right on, and being 'an idle, careless little boy.' But one was not *taught* anything about English literature. English literature is not notes, written by dominies for dominies. You can learn literature in only one way by reading it and enjoying it, and paying no attention to unessential pedantries. Naturally schoolmasters do not understand that. My revered master, Professor D'Arcy Thompson, not being an English master, taught me most of what I ever learned by leaving a truly desirable set of good books within reach, and by showing me what struck him as being worth reading in the contemporary literature of that distant age. But we were not worried with notes, which are only useful in modern examinations, and have no more to do with English literature than with Choctow astrology. If Q. will just look at some modern manuals of the Bible, in separate books, for schools, I think he will find material for another essay. I dare not give specimens, the topic not suiting the chaff which the notes (what notes!) inevitably provoke. But Q. may perhaps be able to say what ought to be said, as it ought to be said.

* * *

I cannot review Mr. Samuel Butler's 'Iliad of Homer, rendered into English Prose for the use of those who cannot read the

Original.'¹ I am a partner in a rival venture; my theories of how to do the thing are not Mr. Butler's. I believe in literalness to a particle, or a recurrent epithet, and I consider it fair to use a somewhat old style in translating an author who was archaic to Sophocles. Mr. Butler permits himself a wider license. The great thing is that people should read Homer, and, if they find one version too dull or old-fashioned, should try another. Meanwhile, forth comes a new champion of Homeric Unity, M. Victor Terret, in his *Homère* (Fontemoing, Paris). M. Terret is a powerful antagonist of the Germans and Mr. Walter Leaf. I think he has Professor Comparetti advancing to back him and my humble self, a triple alliance of France, Italy, and Scotland. He mentions Butscher in his Bibliography. Butscher will be gratified! M. Terret replies to the extraordinary question of Wilamowitz, 'How could a man, sitting down, take off a smock long enough to reach to his feet?' If Wilamowitz does not wear pyjamas he can discover, any morning, how the trick is done. *Faist ce tour qui vireut.* The real answer to the persons who deny the unity of the Homeric poems is that their principles would leave no unity of authorship in any book at all. *Paradise Lost* or *Marmion* could be torn up by applying their critical principles, and, if any one of them will write an imaginative narrative, I am ready to prove, by using his own solvents, that it is a work by an indefinite number of people. There is Mr. Leaf, for example. Let Mr. Leaf write a novel, and let me review it! However, I am sorry I ever devoted time to a theme on which everybody who is not a professional Homeric critic is as well agreed as the Homeric critics are not well agreed among themselves.

ANDREW LANG.

¹ Longman & Co.

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